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on

Traces Of Oriental Mysticism In The Poetry Of The
English Romantic Revival.

(A study in the mysticism of Wordsworth,
Coleridge and Shelley)..

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CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

The present writer found that for many students of English literature in India, the poetry of the period of the Romantic revival has a great fascination. The thought to be found in the poets of this period has a special appeal for them and though generalisations and categorical statements are always hazardous to make, it may be said that an average Indian student of English literature feels more at home with the poetry of the Romantic revival as a whole than with the poetry of any other period of English literature. This is not at all to suggest that the poetry of other periods of English literature does not attract or appeal to the Indian mind. Far from it. English literature has been widely studied in India for well over a century now and no other non-Indian language means so much to Indians as English does. But the point is that with all the natural difficulties and limitations arising from the study of a language and literature not their own, Indian students find themselves breathing a somewhat familiar air when they are in the company of the poets of the Romantic revival. An attempt has been made in the present study to offer some

explanation of this fact. The explanation offered suggests that there are striking similarities between the mystic and philosophic theories of India and the mystical and idealistic thought to be found in the poets of the English Romantic revival.

There is no intention to stretch the similarities and even the identities of thought beyond a certain point: it is not intended to prove that *the* one is derived from the other. While it is certainly the desire of the present writer to compare some of the basic and important ideas permeating the philosophy to be found in the poetry of the English Romantic revival on the one hand and the concepts and theories of oriental philosophy and mysticism on the other, and while he will also make an effort to indicate the points of contact between the two, he does not wish to suggest that the one is in any sense directly dependent on the other. Many things can be similar without their deriving from one another. This can be particularly true in the realm of ideas because there is, after all, a fundamental unity of the human mind. And mystics, in particular, in all ages and countries, have shown a tendency to describe common experiences in more or less similar imagery. All this notwithstanding, the present writer feels that the

study of the thoughts of the poets of the English Romantic revival against the perspective of the related ideas in oriental philosophy and mysticism is a worthwhile study and deserves some emphasis.

The present study is confined to the philosophy and mysticism to be found in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. There is much more direct orientalism in Southey, perhaps, than in any of the poets included in this group, but this study is concerned with philosophical and mystical thoughts and not with the kind of orientalism that we find in Southey. It would perhaps have been possible to include Keats, but the mystical element in him is very slight and as our discussions are meant to be illustrative and suggestive rather than complete and exhaustive, we have been content to deal with the three major philosophical poets. Byron, of course, does not lend himself to any mystical interpretation of the kind that we are proposing to apply in the case of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley.

In dealing with the thought and philosophy of poets, we have to remember that being poets, they are primarily concerned with their moods and experiences and not with expounding any system of philosophy. And as the moods and experiences of the same person vary from time to time, there

are frequent changes in the expression of an individual's outlook on life. In most cases, poetry is the occupation of the poets for a whole life-time, and in a life-time ideas are bound to grow and change - sometimes most significantly and radically. While dealing with the philosophy of the Romantic poets, therefore, we are not dealing with any fixed, static thing, nor with any rigidly unified, systematised set of ideas: we are dealing with the vibrations of highly sensitive minds, their perception of reality and their speculations and intuitions about it. In attempting, therefore, to emphasise the likeness of some of the basic and fundamental aspects of the philosophy and mysticism of the Romantic poets to oriental philosophy, it is not intended to deny either their complexity or their originality. We are only trying to analyse an element of Romantic poetry.

What, in general, are the points of correspondence between Indian philosophy and the thought in Romantic poetry? We do not propose to elaborate here on the question. This will have to be done subsequently in the course of this work. But we can briefly catalogue some of the main points. For facility of enumeration we can divide the points into several categories : viz. (1) Metaphysical; (2) Psychical; (3) Psychological and (4) Ethical. This is obviously not a

rigid, logical classification, but has been introduced for the sake of presenting ideas with some kind of method.

In the class of metaphysical theories and concepts we can put the ideas concerning :

(1) God: Immanent and Transcendent; (2) Pantheism, Monism and Panpsychism; (3) The whole of the universe as a living entity; (4) Matter as illusion and (5) The doctrine of Karma (action and its moral consequence), of Re-incarnation and of the evolution of Life through Form.

In the category of psychical phenomena we can include (1) the notion of man's having subtler bodies and vehicles and not merely the gross physical one that we see with our ordinary eyes and (2) the idea that our thoughts and desires take a form in some medium finer than the physical matter and these thought-forms and desire-forms created by a man during his earthly life may survive the dissolution of his physical body at death.

The psychological doctrines are those which relate to the value of trance and meditation as means of obtaining the knowledge of higher truth and of contacting the spiritual planes of reality. Truth is realised by the exercise of the faculty of intuition and not by the process of reasoning.

In deep meditation, one gets a vision of the unity of all things in the cosmos and sees into the heart of things.

In the ethical category we find the ideas of universal love and forgiveness. It is only when we forgive our enemies that we are fit for bringing about our own evolution and the world's regeneration. Injury to others, if we had eyes to see, is nothing but injury to ourselves.

All these thoughts provide interesting parallelisms and hence we naturally like to enquire whether it is all just incidental or are there points of contact between the two ? The investigation into this question reveals that there was indeed some direct contact made by these poets with Eastern philosophy. But, in the main, the common ground was the Neoplatonic philosophy of the Alexandrian school.

The period in which these Romantic poets lived and that immediately preceding it was one of travels and travel-books. Much new knowledge of hitherto little known tracts of the world, including the Eastern countries, was coming in through the travellers and their accounts. All the three poets whom we are considering had connections with India. Wordsworth's brother, John Wordsworth, was sailing to and fro India(1). Two of Coleridge's

brothers too, John Coleridge and Francis Coleridge, were soldiers in India(2). Three of Shelley's closest friends - Thomas Charles Medwin, Edward John Trelawny and Edward Ellerker Williams - had been in India(3). Shelley himself had become so much interested in India that he wanted to be in India and accept service under some Indian prince(4). Oriental scholars were also emerging, typical of whom were men like Sir Charles Wilkins and Sir William Jones. We have it from Coleridge himself that he had read early in life the works of Wilkins and Jones(5). There is the strongest probability that Shelley also had read the works of Sir William Jones(6). Contemporary English authors like Scott and Southey were deeply interested in India and used Indian materials in their works. Many British painters were in India at this time and painted Indian scenes which excited curiosity about India in the minds of the British people(7). The growing political interest of Britain in India was also naturally bringing it nearer to a large number of people in Britain.

The influence of Neoplatonism on the thought of the Romantic poets is deep and extended. The stream of Neoplatonic thought in English literature has never been dry since the days of Spenser, but there was a great revival of Neoplatonism in the

seventeenth century by the group of philosophers called the Cambridge Platonists. A contemporary influence was Thomas Taylor who translated many works of Plato as well as of the Neoplatonic philosophers like Plotinus, Iamblichus and Proclus. The Cambridge Platonists and also Thomas Taylor presented Plato himself in the light of the development of his philosophy by the Alexandrian School and the later thinkers of the Akademy. Coleridge and Shelley - and Wordsworth, chiefly through Coleridge - derived considerably from the Neoplatonists.

Neoplatonism agrees in many fundamental aspects with the oriental mystical philosophy and is strongly reminiscent of it. It is far nearer to the philosophy of the Vedanta and the Yoga Schools of India than is the philosophy of Plato. While the important points of similarity between the Neoplatonic and Indian philosophies will be described in the course of this work, the question of the extent to which Neoplatonism does or does not derive its doctrines from the thoughts of the East will not be tackled, because that is really a problem of Comparative Philosophy and not of English literature. It will perhaps be sufficient for our purpose to show the similarity of the two in some important respects and also to indicate the

traceable channels of communication of ideas between them. At present there appears to be a large divergence of opinion among the competent scholars of the subject and the question has not been satisfactorily settled one way or the other.

The philosophy of the Romantic poets is in the main mystical philosophy, because they discard discursive reason and depend upon vision and intuition for the perception of truth. Discursive reason, according to them, multiplies distinctions and it is through intuition that one can realize the unity of life and spirit that pervades the whole universe. This is essentially a mystical approach to the understanding of reality.

The mysticism in Romantic poetry is not of the religious or theological kind. These poets, in their mystic poetry, have no religious emotion and do not express their intuitions and visions in the language of theology or in the imagery of religion. In this respect there is a remarkable affinity between the mysticism in Romantic poetry and the oriental and Neoplatonic mysticism, where too the mystical consciousness works against a background of free metaphysical speculation and is not attached to any religious creed or dogmas. This mysticism tends to use the language of scientific psychology rather

than of religion or mythology. In this regard, there is a significant difference between these Romantic poets and the seventeenth-century English mystic poets like Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and Crashaw who are all poets of deep religious emotion and whose mysticism keeps itself within the bounds of and expresses itself within the theological frame-work.

We shall, in the earlier chapters, discuss oriental mysticism and Neoplatonism and show the relationship between them. A discussion of the mysticism of the three poets will then follow and the possible sources of their inspiration will be investigated. At the end, if it appears to some that the evaluation of mysticism in Romantic poetry undertaken here has to an extent been conditioned by the fact that the writer himself comes from the East, all that I can say in defence of this essay is that the approach to the problem by an Easterner might not be wanting in interest to the general body of readers of English Romantic poetry.

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Index of References in CHAPTER I.

- (1). Vide letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to Jane Pollard, Jany 25th 1790, in E.D. Selincourt, The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Oxford 1935. There is another reference to John Wordsworth's going as far east as China in Dorothy Wordsworth's letter to Richard Wordsworth, May 3rd 1804 in E.D. Selincourt, Op. cit. p.388. John Wordsworth was frequently sailing to India and it was on one such voyage that he lost his life on account of shipwreck.
- (2). E.H. Coleridge : Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vol. I, pp.7-8, letter of S.T.C. to Thomas Poole, Sunday, March 1797.
- (3). Vide Introductory chapter entitled 'Shelley's Correspondents' in Roger Ingpen : The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London 1912.
- (4). Ingpen, Roger : The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London 1912, p.929, the letter of Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, Jany 11(?), 1822.
- (5). Muirhead, J.H. : Coleridge as Philosopher, London 1930, Appendix C., the passage quoted from the Ms. of Coleridge in Huttington Library, California.
- (6). Vide (a) Peck : Life of Shelley, Vol. I, pp.24-25 and p.306.
(b) Koeppel : Shelley's Queen Mab and Sir William Jones's Palace of Fortune in Englische Studien, Vol. XXVIII, pp.45-53.
- (7). Foster, William (Sir) : British Artists in India, 1760-1820, in the Walpole Society Publications, Vol. XIX. There were about sixty British artists in India during this period.

CHAPTER II.ORIENTAL MYSTICISM.

The essentials of Mysticism are the same in every time and clime and any attempt to find out points of difference between Oriental and Western mysticism or between modern and ancient has only a limited and relative validity. In fact, the remarkable similarity of the experience of mystics of every time and country is the most evident proof of the truth and the reality of the mystical experience. Reduced to its most quintessential form, mysticism is the direct apprehension of God and the experience of communion with Him. At this fundamental level, there is no distinction between the mystics of one country or of one tradition and those of another. Dean Inge says: "Mysticism is singularly uniform in all times and places. The communion of the soul with God has found much the same expression whether the mystic is a Neoplatonic philosopher like Plotinus, a Mohammadan Sufi, a Catholic monk or a Quaker. Mysticism, which is the living heart of religion, springs from a deeper level than the differences which divide the Churches, the cultural changes which divide the ages of history(1)".

This ultimate inward similarity of mystical experience, however, does not mean that there is an entirely uniform mystical tradition in all countries and at all times. In spite of fundamental and intrinsic similarities we can still study different types and traditions of mysticism. Though relying on their intuitions and visions for the perception of truth and the apprehension of the mystery of life and the understanding of the nature of Reality, the mystics are still the products of particular religious or ideological environments. We can, therefore, always broadly classify types of mysticism. The inner agreement of spirit does not obliterate all personal or typical distinctions between the mystics. Though the Neo-platonic philosopher, the Mohammadan Sufi, the Catholic monk and the Quaker saint in their moments of mystic illumination transcend "the differences which divide the Churches, the cultural changes which divide the ages of history", they remain identifiable as representatives of their class or group.

A mystical experience may be just a state of personal blissfulness in which case the mystic need not speak much to others and may not have much to convey except the sense of ecstatic delight that he felt. But the mystic may also see visions

and receive illuminations. These visions and illuminations bring knowledge - usually metaphysical knowledge. Mysticism, therefore, usually becomes a source of occult and metaphysical knowledge. A group of mystics belonging to a particular tradition develop a system of metaphysical ideas which becomes a particular mystical philosophy. We can call a philosophy mystical when its ideas and theories derive their sanction not from arguments and reason, but from a direct perception and intuition of truth. Incidentally, a school of mysticism might also propound the methods by which aspirants to mystical consciousness might progress on the path.

It is in this sense that we can speak of Christian, Islamic or Indian mysticism. In each case, there is a tradition and a body of ideas. These systems are not contradictory or exclusive, but while many things are common and similar, there are some points of distinction as well which give to each system its own individuality and mark it out as an independent type. Even similar ideas expressed against a different background assume some difference of colour and tone. We can take an analogy from a landscape. If we analyse the elements that form a landscape, one landscape might have the same constituents as another - trees,

rocks, a rivulet, clouds, etc., but a different disposition of the same constituents will produce an altogether different perspective and impression.

The ancient Indian mysticism expounded principally in the Upanishads and carried forward in the Vedanta and the Yoga philosophies and also expressed poetically in the Bhagavad-Gita constitutes one such type. In this mystic philosophy as elsewhere, there are further distinctions and subdivisions, but we wish to take note here only of the main trends and concepts of the Upanishadic philosophy. The early Upanishads are parts of the Vedas and contain philosophic-mystic speculations of the ancient Indian seers. Competent authorities have fixed the date of the principal early Upanishads to be before the sixth century B.C.(2). The Bhagavad-Gita is a part of the famous Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, and its date has been accepted to be between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.(3). The Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita are the source-books of Indian mystic philosophy. They have thrilled and inspired Indian people throughout the centuries and when they were translated into European languages they caught the imagination of many people in the West. When the celebrated German philosopher Schopenhauer read the Latin translation of the Upanishads made from Persian by

Anquetil Duperron and published in 1801-1802, he wrote about them in his "Welt als Wille und Vorstellung";

"If the reader has also received the benefit of the Vedas, the access to which by means of the Upanishads is in my eyes the greatest privilege which this still young century (1818) may claim before all previous centuries, (for I anticipate that the influence of Sanskrit literature will not be less profound than the revival of Greek in the fourteenth century) - if then the reader, I say, has received his initiation in primeval Indian wisdom, and received it with an open heart, he will be prepared in the very best way for hearing what I have to tell him. It will not sound to him strange, as to many others, much less disagreeable; for I might, if it did not sound conceited, contend that every one of the detached statements which constitute the Upanishads, may be deduced as a necessary result from the fundamental thoughts which I have to enunciate, though those deductions are by no means to be found there... .. From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. Indian air surrounds us, and original thoughts of kindred spirits. And oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions, and of all philosophy that cringes before those superstitions ! In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death ! In most of the pagan philosophical writers of the first Christian centuries we see the Jewish theism, which, as Christianity, was soon to become the faith of the people, shining through, much as at present we may perceive shining through in the writings of the learned, the native pantheism of India, which is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people.(4)".

And Aldous Huxley has made the following observation in his introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita:

"The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind... The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy(5)".

There are many similar testimonies, but these opinions may be taken as indicative of the impact these books made on Western thinkers interested in Indian philosophic thought.

A very brief outline of Indian mysticism as expounded in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita is attempted here below. Neither the space at my disposal nor the trend and purpose of my essay will permit any lengthy presentation and discussion of oriental mysticism here. My object in seeking to present a brief outline of Indian mysticism here is only to take note of some of the basic ideas and concepts of oriental mysticism of the Indian type so that we may have a background against which it may be convenient to illustrate the similarities and point out the parallelisms between oriental mysticism and the philosophy of the English Romantic poets.

Every system of philosophy aims at explaining the universe and all that goes on in it. It seeks to tell us what the universe is, how it came

into existence and what is its significance. It brings out man's place in the cosmos and the meaning of his life. If it is ~~is~~ theistic, it discusses God in His relationship with the universe. The mystical philosophies too are interested in these and all alike questions and advance a body of ideas based on the collective intuitions of the mystics of a particular school or tradition.

I have divided my outline of Indian mysticism into five sections. These sections deal respectively with the ideas concerning (1) God; (2) the universe; (3) Man; (4) the Law of the evolution of life and (5) the union of the human and Cosmic consciousness. In a subsequent section - the sixth - I have discussed some important points of distinctions between Indian mysticism and Western, Christian mysticism. It should be mentioned that there is no such classification of ideas either in the Upanishads or in the Bhagavad-Gita. But though the classification is mine, the ideas all come from these source-books of Indian mysticism. I have culled the ideas and arranged them in the order suggested above, so that I can string them together and give a brief synopsis of the subject.

I shall now sketch the outline giving the ideas section-wise in the manner indicated above.

SECTION I.God.

(a) The Transcendant :- The ultimate Godhead is conceived of as the Absolute, the Transcendent, beyond all description. The Godhead is everyway limitless, so attributing any quality to Him will be limiting His Being. In His essential nature He transcends all creation, all manifestation of every kind. He is the One without a Second. He is beyond the mind, beyond every thing that we know or can know. As He is past all attributes, all distinctions, the Upanishads sometimes use a neuter 'It' rather than 'He' when they refer to Him. The Tālavakara-Upanishad says:

"The eye does not go thither, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know, we do not understand, how can any one teach it.

It is different from the known, it is also above the unknown, thus we have heard from those of old, who taught us this,

That which is not expressed by speech and by which speech is expressed, that alone know as Brahman, not this which people here adore(6)".

The Bṛihadāraṇyaka-Upanishad puts the same ideas as follows:

"That Self (ātman) is to be described by No, no ! He is incomprehensible, for he cannot be (is not) comprehended; he is imperishable, for he cannot perish; he is unattached, for he does not attach himself; unfettered he does not suffer, he does not fail(7)".

The Bhagavad-Gita expresses the idea thus:

"Since I excel the destructible, and am more excellent also than the indestructible, in the world and in the Veda I am proclaimed the Supreme Spirit(8)".

There is an interesting story of this negative approach to the Supreme, Transcendent Brahman given by the famous Indian Vedantic philosopher Shankaracharya which has been quoted by Max-Muller in his Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy:

'Vashkali said: "Sir, tell me Brahman". Then Bahva became quite still. When Vashkali had asked a second and a third time, Bahva replied: "We are telling it, but thou dost not understand, that self is quite still(9)". '

Max-Muller adds:

"We can only say 'No, No' of God, just as Athanasius declared (ad Monachos 2) that it is impossible to comprehend what God is, and we can only say what He is not. And if St. Augustine said that with regard to God, silence is better than a fight of words (De Doctr. Christ. 1,6.), Indian philosophy had anticipated him in this also(10)".

This does not mean, however, that the Transcendent Godhead has been conceived of as utter void. It is not possible to describe Him only because of the difficulty of knowing and describing Him in terms of human experience and language. As Absolute Existence, He is the ultimate ground of all knowledge. He, the ultimate ground and source of all knowledge, cannot Himself be known. The Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad puts this point

forcefully:

"For when there is as it were duality, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other, one salutes the other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one touches the other, one knows the other; but when the Self only is all this, how should he see another, how should he smell another, how should he taste another, how should he salute another, how should he hear another, how should he touch another, how should he know another ? How should he know Him by whom he knows all this ? How.. should he know the Knower ?(11)".

The Transcendent is compact fullness and not void. The Ishopanishad says that the manifested universe which is fullness comes out of the Transcendent who is fullness. The Full comes out of the Full but thereby the Fullness of the Absolute is not impaired:

"OM ! Whole is That, whole (too) is this; from whole, whole cometh; take whole from whole, (yet) whole remains(12)".

The One without a Second embraces all, but transcends all. I will close this sub-section by picking out one quotation each from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

The Katha-Upanishad says:

"The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. When he shines, everything shines after him; by his light all this is lighted(13)".

And the Bhagavad-Gita hymns:

"But what is the knowledge of all these details to thee, O Arjuna ? Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I remain(14)".

(b) The Immanent:- As the verse in the Bhagavad-Gita quoted just above maintains, the Transcendent and Increate suffers a fragment of Himself to appear in manifestation without, of course, impairing or limiting His inexhaustible Transcendence in any way. Prof. Max-Muller, in his Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, remarks:

"Here you see the transcendent character of the Self maintained, even after it has become incarnate, just as we hold that God is present in all things, but also transcends them (Westcott, St. John, p.160). (15)"

The entire universe comes out of God, every atom is pervaded by Him, in fact, there is nothing in the universe that is not divine in its essence and composition. The Mundaka-Upanishad says:

"As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, as from every man hairs spring forth on the head and the body, thus does every thing arise here from the Indestructible.

The Brahman swells by means of brooding (penance); hence is produced matter (food); from matter breath, mind, the true, the worlds (seven), and from the works (performed by men in the worlds), the immortal (the eternal effects, rewards and punishments of works).

From him who perceives all and who knows all, whose brooding (penance) consists of knowledge, from him (the highest Brahman) is born that Brahman, name, form, and matter (food). (16)".

The relationship between the universe and God is the same as that between the spider and its web: the universe is nothing but the web of the

Divine Weaver who weaves it out of Himself. The Tattiriyaka-Upanishad explains this point thus:

"He wished, may I be many, may I grow forth. He brooded over himself (like a man performing penance). After he had thus brooded, he sent forth (created) all, whatever there is. Having sent forth, he entered into it. Having entered it, he became sat (what is manifest) and tyat (what is not manifest), defined and undefined, supported and not supported, (endowed with) knowledge and without knowledge (as stones), real and unreal.* The Sattya (true) became all this whatsoever, and therefore the wise call it (the Brahman) Sat-tya (the true). (17)".

* (Note - "What appears as real and unreal to the senses, not the really real and unreal".
Max-Muller).

The idea of immanence is expressed in the Bhagavad-Gita too quite prominently at many places and we can take the following two verses for illustration:

"From the unmanifested all the manifested stream forth at the coming of day; at the coming of night they dissolve even in That called the unmanifested(18)".

"My womb is the great Eternal; in that I place the germ; thence cometh the birth of all beings, O Bharata(19)".

(c) The One-Many: the Many-One:- We have seen in the quotation from the Tattiriyaka-Upanishad in the preceding sub-section, that the One wished to be Many and so he created the universe out of Himself. We can once more recollect the simile of the spider and the web. It is the One who has spun out Himself into the Many; the many therefore

are in essence nothing but the One. The Mundaka-Upanishad images the thousandfold beings in the universe to be nothing but the sparks thrown off from one fire. It says:

"This is the truth. As from a blazing fire sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousandfold, thus are various beings brought forth from the Imperishable, my friend, and return thither also(20)".

The Svetāsvatara-Upanishad conceives of the one God hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the one seed which has grown into this huge cosmos. It says:

"He is the one God, hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only one free from qualities.

He is the one ruler of many who (seem to act, but really do) not act; he makes the one seed manifold. The wise who perceive him within their self, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others(21)".

The Katha-Upanishad also urges the point with great force and lucidity:

"As the one fire, after it has entered the world, though one, becomes different according to whatever it burns, thus the one Self within all things becomes different, according to whatever it enters, and exists also without.

As the one air after it has entered the world, though one, becomes different according to whatever it enters, thus the one Self within all things becomes different, according to whatever it enters, and exists also without.

As the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not contaminated by the external impurities seen by the eyes, thus the one Self within all things is never contaminated by the misery of the world, being himself without.

There is one ruler, the Self within all things, who makes the one form manifold. The wise who perceive him within their Self, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others(22)".

The Bhagavad-Gita, probably under the inspiration of the Upanishads, expresses the same thoughts in an almost identical language:

"I, O Gudakesha, am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings(23)".

and

"As the one sun illumineth the whole earth, so the Lord of the Field illumineth the whole Field, O Bharata(24)".

Before I pass on to the next section, I should like to make clear that the opinion that Indian mysticism is pantheistic is correct but with certain reservation. There is no doubt that the entire universe is conceived of as Divine Immanence and therefore is nothing but Divine. But while the universe is God, it does not exhaust Divinity. According to some conceptions of pantheism, the universe and God are identical in extent. This is not the view of the Upanishads. God is immanent in the universe, but He transcends the universe also. The universe is not equated with God. The universe comprises only a fragment of the Divine Reality. The two are not differentiated, but the two are not identical in extent.

SECTION II.The Universe.

(a) The Cosmos as the Body of God:- Something about the character and the composition of the universe has already been said in the previous section while discussing the Immanence of God. The principal school of the Vedanta philosophy is monistic i.e. it upholds the theory that nothing other than God exists. The universe, therefore, consists of nothing but God-stuff. All that is, is God. Nothing else does exist, or can exist. The universe is, as it were the body of God.

We read in the Svetāswatara-Upanishad:

"The person (purusha) with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, having compassed the earth on every side, extends beyond it by ten finger's breadth.

That person alone (purusha) is all this, what has been and what will be; he is also the lord of immortality; he is whatever grows by food.

Its hands and feet are everywhere, its eyes and head are everywhere, its ears are everywhere, it stands encompassing all in the world(25)".

Exactly the same imagery occurs in the Rig-Veda:

"Purusa, who has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, investing the earth in all directions, exceeds (it by a space) measuring ten fingers.

Purusa is verily all this (visible world), all that is, and all that is to be, he is also the Lord of immortality, for he mounts beyond (his own condition) for the food (of living beings).

Such is his greatness, and Purusa is greater even than this, all beings are one-fourth of him, his other three-fourths (being) immortal, (abide) in

heaven.

Three-fourths of Purusa ascended; the other fourth that remained in this world proceeds repeatedly, and diversified in various forms, went into all animate and inanimate creation (26)".

The Atharva-Veda also has a similar hymn (xix, 6.1).

The Bhagavad-Gita presents the same picture in its eleventh chapter where Krishna, who represents the Transcendent Godhead, reveals his cosmic body to Arjuna, and grants him clairvoyance so that he can see it. The description covers about twenty verses out of which I quote only a few :

"The blessed Lord said: Behold, O Partha, a Form of Me, a hundredfold, a thousandfold various in kind, divine, various in colours and shapes".
(Then Arjuna saw him) "With many mouths and eyes, with many visions of marvel, with many divine ornaments, with many upraised divine weapons;

There Pandava beheld the whole universe divided into manifold parts, standing in one in the body of the Deity of Deities".

(Arjuna said to the Lord) :

"By thee alone are filled the earth, the heavens,
And all the regions, that are stretched between;
The triple worlds sink down, O Mighty One,
Before Thine awful manifested Form". (27)

The universe is thus one single living entity. Every atom is nothing but divine-stuff and is, therefore, alive and sentient. There is but one life and one mind working in the whole of the

universe. Along with the theory of pantheism also goes the theory of panpsychism. Hence the whole universe is conceived of as interpenetrated with one life and one mind.

(b) The Universe: Real or Unreal ? :- It may seem strange that after having asserted so emphatically that the whole universe is pervaded by God and that each atom is divine matter, the question of the reality of the universe should be raised by the Vedanta philosophy, but the question is raised and that too very prominently. According to the Vedanta, from a metaphysical point of view, the phenomenal universe is only Māyā, an illusion. It is an illusion, because what we see and perceive with our senses and our mind is only the appearance and not the Reality. All the multiplicity of name and form is only an appearance, because in reality nothing but God exists and the diversity is only apparent, illusory. The Vedanta conception of the Reality is monistic and so this variegated universe with all its immense diversity is all a false show. It is also illusory because it is impermanent, it is in a state of constant change and flux, and from a metaphysical point of view, the impermanent and the fleeting cannot be Real. It is also unreal because from an epistemological point of

view the universe is merely a subjective apprehension, a self-projection of each individual and there is no objective reality about phenomena. Moreover, the universe is only an ideation, a thought-form of God as is maintained in the Prasna-Upanishad(28). The phenomenal universe appears real to us on account of Avidyā, Nescience - a lack of correct knowledge and true vision. Yet while the universe with its multiplicity of name and form, with its diversity of phenomena, is unreal, it is, in its ultimate essence, not unreal, because it has emanated from the Highest Reality, the Absolute. So what is unreal is the phenomenal character of the universe, not its ultimate essence. Just as the science of Chemistry reduces all matter in the universe to a few elements, the monistic Vedanta philosophy reduces the universe to one element, namely, the divine essence. This is the paradox of the universe: it is both real and unreal. In its multiple phenomenal aspect it is unreal, but if we transcend the diversity of phenomena and see it as a unity of life and mind, it is true and real. The standpoint of the Vedanta and the Upanishads in this regard has been very clearly stated by Prof. Max-Muller in his Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy and I can do no better

than quote him. He says:

"And what applies to Brahman, as the Great Cause of all things, applies also to the Great Effect, namely, the universe. Its substantial reality is not denied, for that rests on Brahman, but all that we see and hear by our limited senses, all that we perceive and conceive and name, is purely phenomenal, as we say, is the result of Avidya, as the Vedantists say. The universal simile that the world is a dream turns up frequently in the Vedanta.

That what we call our real world is a world of our own making, that nothing can be long or short, black or white, bitter or sweet, apart from us, that our experience does not in fact differ from a dream, was boldly enunciated by Bishop Berkeley, of whom John Stuart Mill, no idealist by profession, declares that he was the greatest philosophical genius of all who, from the earliest times, have applied the powers of their minds to metaphysical inquiries. This is a strong testimony from such a man.

'The physical universe', Bishop Berkeley writes, 'which I see and feel and infer, is just my dream and nothing else; that which you see, is your dream; only it so happens that our dreams agree in many respects'.

The late Professor Clifford, who likewise was no dreamer and no idealist, expressed just the same conviction when he wrote (Fortnightly Review, 1875, p.780): 'For physical purposes a dream is just as good as real life, the only difference is in vividness and coherence'. Now what does the Vedantist say? As long as we live, he says, we dream; and our dream is real as long as we dream; but when we die, or rather when we awake and our eyes are opened by knowledge, a new world, a new reality rises before us, what Plato called the real world, of which before we knew the shadows only. This does not mean that the phenomenal world is altogether nothing - no, it is always the effect of which Brahman, the source of all reality, is the cause, and as,

according to the Vedanta, there cannot be any substantial difference between cause and effect, the phenomenal world is substantially as real as Brahman, nay is, in its ultimate reality, Brahman itself(29)".

SECTION III.

Man.

(a) The Soul:- Man is conceived of as having a soul and several sheaths or bodies. The image comes in the Upanishads again and again of the soul being the real entity in man and the bodies as being merely the instruments or vehicles through which the soul acts. The Katha-Upanishad says:

"Know the Self to be sitting in the chariot, the body to be the chariot, the intellect (buddhi) the charioteer, and the mind the reins.

The senses they call the horses, the objects of the senses their roads. When he (the Highest Self) is in union with the body, the senses, and the mind, then wise people call him the Enjoyer.

He who has no understanding and whose mind (the reins) is never firmly held, his senses (horses) are unmanageable, like vicious horses of a charioteer.

But he who has understanding and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control, like good horses of a charioteer(30)".

Prof. F. Max-Muller comments on the above:

"The simile of the chariot has some points of similarity with the well-known passage in Plato's Phaedros, but Plato did not borrow this simile from the Brahmanas, as little as Xenophon need have consulted our Upanishads... in writing his prologue of Prodikos(31)".

This soul or Self in man is immortal and indestructible. The Katha-Upanishad describes its indestructible nature in I.2.18-19 (32) and both the idea and the words are echoed in the Bhagavad-Gita which says:

"He who regardeth this (the Self) as a slayer, and he who thinketh he is slain, both of them are ignorant. He slayeth not, nor is he slain;

He is not born, nor doth he die; nor having been ceaseth he any more to be; unborn, perpetual, eternal and ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered....

As a man, casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new.

Weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor waters wet him, nor wind drieth him away(33)".

The individual soul is identical in nature and substance with the Over-Soul. Its separateness is not real and even the temporary illusion of separateness is due to its having become encased in bodies or sheaths which are obstructions or conditioning factors (Upādhis). As soon as man overcomes Avidyā, Nescience, and gets true Jñāna or Vidyā, Right Knowledge, this temporary and illusory separateness of the individual Self from the Over-Soul ends. This realisation of the identity of the individual Self with the Over-Soul is really the goal of the Vedānta and the Yoga philosophies.

Prof. F. Max-Muller while concluding his Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, quotes and translates a Sanskrit couplet, which bears on this theme, as epitomising the teaching of the Vedanta. He says:

"Now, the quintessence of the Vedanta philosophy has been formulated by a native philosopher in one short line, and it would be well if the same could be done for other systems of philosophy also. Our Vedantist says... ..
'In one half verse I shall tell you what has been told in thousands of volumes:- Brahman is true, the world is false, man's soul is Brahman and nothing else' - or as we should say: 'God is true, the world is fleeting, man's soul is God and nothing else(34)".

(b) The Sheaths or Bodies:- The Upanishads conceive of man, the true ego, as encased in a number of sheaths or coverings. It is these sheaths (the bodies) which maintain the individuality of man i.e. cause the individual soul to remain separate from the Over-Soul. Therefore, from one point of view these bodies are obstructions to the individual soul becoming at one with the Over-Soul; from another point of view they are the necessary conditions of individualised existence. According to a broad classification, the bodies are two - the gross and the subtle (Sthūla-Sariram and Sūkshma-Sariram). The gross body is the physical body and the finer bodies are classed together as the subtle body. But the

detailed classification includes five or even seven bodies. The Tattirīyaka-Upanishad (II.2-5) describes the five bodies of man, namely, those made of physical, etheric, mental, higher mental, and spiritual matter respectively. These bodies are said to fill the man and be of his shape(35). Annie Besant, writing on the subject, in her book, The Self and Its Sheaths, says the following:-

"And you will remember that five sheaths are given: the highest is Anandmayakosha, bliss sheath, Buddhi; then coming downwards there is the sheath for higher Manas (Mind) and Kama (Desire), the Manomayakosha, for all manifestations of working intellect and desire; and yet another for Prana (vital force); and another the food sheath, the Annamayakosha, which is made of the physical material of the universe. These are the sheaths and all have to be builded by the One(36)".

These bodies are present in every one, but the higher bodies are used more and more by men who become advanced in intellectual, ethical and spiritual evolution. Thus a man whose life consists mainly of crude, passionate desires will be generally using, besides the physical, the desire sheath and will make it vibrate with his base emotions. A philosopher or a scientist who thinks out theories and is concerned with concepts and abstractions, will be energising and exercising the higher mental body (the Vijnanmaya-

kosha). A holy saint or a mystic, in a moment of ecstasy of devotion or mystic illumination, will be functioning in his intuitional body (the Anandmayakosha), the sheath of bliss.

Thoughts and desires of men assume actual forms and colours in the matter of the finer planes of Nature on which the psychic bodies of men function. The form depends upon the nature of the thought or desire, the colour on its quality and the clearness of outline is determined by the definiteness of the thought or emotion. These thought-forms and desire-forms surround the man who has created them and become a part of his aura which a clairvoyant can see. Some of these thought-forms and desire-forms may last very long, and may survive the dissolution of the physical body of a man at his death. Then the disembodied man will see these thought-forms and desire-forms which he had created while in his physical body. As hinted above, good and noble thoughts and desires produce pleasing thought-forms and desire-forms, the bad ones produce ugly and terrifying ones. Thus a man is literally creating a heaven or a hell for himself according as his thoughts and desires are good or bad during his physical life on earth. The Mundaka-Upanishad (III.1.10) speaks of the great

powers that the thoughts and desires of a man have(37).

A man can make or mar himself with the power of his thoughts and desires.

(c) Death:- There is no space here to consider the Upanishadic eschatology which is quite elaborate and intricate. We may, however, only notice in passing that death is considered to be the mere casting off of the physical and some of the other lower vestures (sheaths) of man when they become worn-out and when it would help evolution better to have new sheaths. The verse of the Bhagavad-Gita already quoted (p.32 Supra) speaks of death as casting off of old vestures. Death is nothing to be feared, nor does it bring much hope or relief, because till a man obtains final liberation by true knowledge preceded by ethical progress, the process of birth and death continues. At each turning of the wheel of life there is birth and death and this continues till one achieves liberation from the fetters of life. Yet, inasmuch as, after death, the Self is rid of some of its lower (grosser) bodies(vehicles), it has better knowledge of reality because it is freer from some of the coverings which impede man's clear perception of things as they really are. Death, therefore, brings one nearer to the

core of reality and enables one to have a less misty vision of truth.

SECTION IV.

The LAW of Evolution.

(a) Evolution of Life through Form:- We have seen that the entire universe according to the Upanishads is an emanation from the One who pervades it through and through. It follows from this monistic doctrine of creation that all things are divine and reflect divinity to the extent that is possible according to their form.

The Svetāsvatara-Upanishad says:-

"Beyond this (world), the Brahman beyond, the mighty one, in every creature hid according to its form, the one encircling lord of all - Him having known, immortal they become(38)".

It does not mean that one thing is more divine than another; all things are equally so, but in the making of the universe the divine descends further and further down and divinity (except to the eye of the mystic who sees the inner truth at once) becomes more and more latent. Yet nothing is without life, however material and inanimate it may appear to the outward sight. The whole creation is alive. The Mundaka-Upanishad says:

"Life sure is He who flames through all creation. The wise man knowing Him, speaks

of naught else; he sports in Self, in Self finds his delight, yet doth he acts perform, best of God-knowers he(39)".

The mineral and the vegetable kingdoms of Nature are alive along with the animal and the human kingdoms. Nothing that seems inanimate is really so. All life has emanated from God, and there is a centripetal force working through all creation; all life wants to return to God. All life is evolving, moving towards God. Life takes such forms as can best express its condition and serve its purpose in its onward evolutionary journey. Matter has no form of its own; it is life which moulds it into such forms as best suit it and the life-stream passes upward from lower forms to higher according as it progresses on the path of evolution. Thus the more evolved the life within, the more developed the form will be which encases it.

(b) The Doctrines of Rebirth and Karma:- When, in the process of evolution, the life-stream reaches the human kingdom, the living beings (i.e. men) have to bear a moral responsibility for all their actions and all these actions lead to further results. The Karma or the action of men leads to rebirth because actions done in a lifetime set into motion forces which must lead to another life to work themselves out. Thus a man passes

from birth to birth bound in the chains of his Karma. The law of Karma is the law of action and its moral consequences: a good Karma leads to good results and a bad Karma leads to bad ones. It is the bundle of collective Karma done in a life-time which determines the happiness or unhappiness of man in his subsequent life. In a real sense, therefore, man is the maker of his own circumstances in life. This is how Indian philosophy tries to rationalise the problem of human suffering. On the subject of Karma and Rebirth the Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad states:

"And as a caterpillar, after having reached the end of a blade of grass, and after having made another approach (to another blade), draws itself together towards it, thus does this Self, after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, and after making another approach (to another body), draw himself together towards it.

And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold turns it into another, newer and more beautiful shape, so does this Self, after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, make unto himself another, newer and more beautiful shape, whether it be like the Fathers, or like the Gandharvas, or like the Devas, or like Pragapati, or like Brahman, or like other beings.

That Self is indeed Brahman, consisting of knowledge, mind, life, sight, hearing, earth, water, wind, ether, light and no light, desire and no desire, anger and no anger, right or wrong, and all things. Now as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be:- a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad.

He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds.

And here they say that a person consists of his desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

And here there is this verse: 'To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously together with his deed; and having obtained the end (the last results) of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world (which is the temporary reward of his deed) to this world of action'.

So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere, - being Brahman, he goes to Brahman.

On this there is this verse: 'When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he obtains Brahman'.

And as the slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill, dead and cast away, thus lies the body; but that disembodied immortal spirit (prana, life) is Brahman only, is only light(40)".

The Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad is one of the very early Upanishads and its language at places is archaic, but in the words quoted above, we see the germs of the theory of Karma and Rebirth. In general, men continue to make progress in life after life till they reach the goal of human evolution. In each subsequent life, men start from where they stopped in the previous life. They carry forward their experiences and the fruits of actions of their previous life in a concentrated

form in their psychic vehicles and march onward on the path of evolution. The Bhagavad-Gita says:

"There (in the next life) he recovereth characteristics belonging to this former body, and with these he again laboureth to perfection, O joy of the Kurus(41)".

Struggling this way, life after life, men reach the end of their pilgrimage and become perfected men. And finally, the self becomes merged in the Self and there is no distinction left between the two.

SECTION V.

The Unification of Human and Cosmic Consciousness and the Beatific Vision.

Evolution proceeds by means of Rebirth guided by the Law of Karma in the course of nature, but by conscious and deliberate effort the process can be expedited and the goal can be achieved in a much shorter time by spiritual aspirants. Release comes as a result of true knowledge (about the nature of Reality) and so long as we are in the world of the senses and the mind we are shut off from the Reality. Knowledge of truth can be attained by transcending the mind. The practical science of Yoga seeks to fulfil this objective. Yoga is a science of

psychology by the knowledge of which (followed by practical exercises) man can transcend the limitations of the senses and the mind and unite his own consciousness with Cosmic consciousness. The subject of Yoga is touched in various Upanishads. The Katha-Upanishad, for example, states how the Real Self is beyond the senses, the mind and reason and it cannot be understood with the help of any one of these instruments of man.

It says:

"Beyond the senses there are the objects,
beyond the objects there is the mind,
beyond the mind there is the intellect,
the Great Self is beyond the intellect
(42)".

And again:

"When the five instruments of knowledge stand still together with the mind, and when the intellect does not move, that is called the highest state.

This, the firm holding back of the senses, is what is called Yoga(43)".

The Bhagavad-Gita emphasises the value of Yoga at several places and describes, to some extent, the methods as well. It says:

"Having external contacts excluded and with gaze fixed between the eye-brows, having made equal the outgoing and the ingoing breaths moving within the nostrils;

With senses, mind, and Reason ever controlled, solely pursuing liberation, the sage, having cast away desire, fear and passion, verily is liberated
(44)".

"That should be known by the name of Yoga, this disconnection from the union with pain. This Yoga must be clung to with a firm conviction and with undes-

ponding mind.

Abandoning without reserve all desires born of the imagination, by the mind curbing the aggregate of the senses on every side,

Little by little let him gain tranquillity by means of Reason controlled by steadiness; having made the mind abide in the Self, let him not think of anything(45)".

The connotations of the terms, - senses, mind and reason - do not appear to be altogether identical as used in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita; each of these books has its own terminology and we have to refer to its separate context for the exact meaning of each term as used in these treatises. But it is quite clear that Yoga aims at the attainment of the stillness and serenity of mind. Yoga is the means of achieving the control of the mind till one reaches the state of ecstasy or trance. In the state of ecstasy, a man stands out, as it were, from the normal functions of his mind and is in contact with truth. In this state, he is above the illusions which the mind and the senses produce and he perceives the Reality unfettered by the limitations normally imposed upon him by his psychic and physical vehicles.

The principles of Yoga were codified in his Yoga-Sūtras (Yoga aphorisms) by Patanjali who is believed to have lived in the second century B.C.(46). The Yoga-Sūtras deal with all aspects

of Yoga including its metaphysical background.

We are, however, concerned at the moment only with the principle of the control of the mind. S.

Dasgupta, in Yoga as Philosophy and Religion (Trubner's Oriental Series), has described the eight stages of Yoga as formulated by Patanjali

as follows:

I. Yama (restraint). These yama restraints are: abstinence from injury (ahimsā); veracity; abstinence from theft; continence; abstinence from avarice.

II. Niyama (observances). These observances are cleanliness, contentment, purificatory action, study and the making of God the motive of all action.

III. Asanas (posture). Steady posture and easy position are regarded as an aid to breath control.

IV. Regulation of breath (Prāṇāyāma) is the stoppage of the inspiratory and expiratory movements (of breath) which may be practised when steadiness of posture has been secured.

V. Pratyāharā (abstraction). With the control of the mind all the senses become controlled and the senses imitate as it were, the vacant state of the mind. Abstraction is that by which the senses do not come in contact with their objects and follow as it were the nature of the mind.

VI. Dhāraṇā (concentration). Concentration is the steadfastness of the mind applied to a particular object.

VII. Dhyāna (meditation). The continuation there of the mental effort by continually repeating the object is meditation (dhyāna).

VIII. Samādhi (Trance contemplation). The same as above when shining with the light of the object alone, and devoid as it were of itself, is trance. In this state the mind becomes one with its object and there is no difference between the knower and the known(47)".

Of these eight stages, the first four are preparatory to a yogic life of meditation (mind control). The last four are concerned and deal with the conditions of the mind. The final stage in the series is that of Samādhi, i.e. trance or ecstasy. The following extract from the writing of Prof. Max-Muller on the subject of Yoga will show that, according to Patanjali, the highest state of contemplation and meditation is that of ecstasy:

"If now we turn to the Yoga-Sūtras of Patanjali we find that the first book, the Samādhi-pāda, is devoted to an explanation of the form and aim of Yoga, and of Samādhi, meditation or absorption of thought; the second, the Sadhanā-pāda, explains the means of arriving at this absorption; the third, Vibhūti-pāda, gives an account of the supernatural powers that can be obtained by absorption and ascetic exercises; while the fourth, the Kaivalya-pāda, explains Kaivalya to be the highest object of all these exercises, of concentration of thought, and of deep absorption and ecstasy. (Kaivalya, from Kevala, alone, means the isolation of the soul from the universe and its return to itself(48)".

It is in this state of ecstasy that the soul isolates itself from the universe and returns to itself. It represents, in the words of Plotinus, the flight of the alone, to the Alone.

The individual consciousness is merged in the Cosmic consciousness and the soul enjoys the beatific vision of cosmic unity. There is no disharmony to be found anywhere by a man who has this vision. For him there exists no evil in the universe, for the perception of evil is due to a limited vision of life. When one is face to face with the vision of the cosmic unity of life, nothing exists apart from oneself and so there is no distinction between self and not-self. Such a man can think no evil of others, for all injury to others is really injury to himself. He loves all, because he is at one with all. The microcosm and the macrocosm are one and the same thing.

The Sufi-type of Islamic mysticism also aims at the same goal. This is not an occasion to go into the details of Sufism, but I cannot refrain from the temptation of giving at least one short extract from R.A. Nicholson's The Mystics of Islam:

"The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual soul is lost, the Universal Self is found, or, in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God. Ascetism, purification, love, gnosis, saintship - all leading ideas of Sufism - are developed from this cardinal principle(49)".

When this beatific moment of ecstasy comes, the earth and every common sight become "apparalled

in celestial light(50)". The apocalyptic vision transfigures this world of ours into heaven and the dullest cloud of earth sends forth "gleams like the flashing of a shield(51)". Heaven is here and now and man is the inheritor of all this glory. The individual 'I' is the Cosmic 'I'.

SECTION VI.

Some Points of Difference Between Christian Mysticism and Oriental Mysticism.

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, the phenomenon of mysticism is more a study in the uniform behaviour of human consciousness than in its diversity. The essence of mysticism, whether Christian or non-Christian, is very much the same. Yet, we can note here a few important points of difference between Christian and Oriental mysticism. These distinctions relate only broadly to the two types: individual mystics of either category may not exactly answer to the typical features of their class. The points noted below, therefore, have only a general and suggestive value in the study of the two types of mysticism.

(a). Perhaps an outstanding point of difference is in the approach of the two to the problem of human suffering. Oriental mysticism regards all

suffering as originating from Māyā and Avidyā - Illusion and Nescience. Liberation, therefore, comes from true knowledge (Jnāna). When a man rises above illusion and nescience by means of true knowledge, he works out his salvation. In Christian mysticism, suffering is the result of sin. Salvation, therefore, comes from God's grace.

The emphasis in the one is on preparing the mind to be able to get rid of nescience. The emphasis in the other is on the repentance for our sins so that we may receive God's grace. Eastern mysticism very strongly emphasises that the individual soul is of the same essence as God; in fact, the two are one and liberation consists in realising this unity and in shedding all sense of the separateness of the two. The Christian mystic may participate in the Divine, but he does not conceive of wiping out all distinctions between the human soul and God. This difference of outlook determines very largely the character of the two types of mysticism. In practice, the two may not be very different; but the theoretical and conceptual difference is fundamental. In practice, both will agree on the necessity of acquiring ethical virtues, but in the one, this will be done to purify the physical and the psychic

vehicles to enable a man to get the vision of truth; in the other, the saint will practise virtue to please God so that His grace may descend on him. The Christian mystic passed through a phase of penitence for his sins; the Vedantic mystic need not, because he has only his ignorance (about the nature of reality) to overcome.

(b). In Eastern mysticism much emphasis is laid on controlling the emotions and developing serenity of the mind. All emotions and passions have to be stilled, the mind must be rid of its thinking activity. There is a note of emotional and mental austerity in oriental mysticism. Christian mysticism, on the other hand, admits of deep fervour and religious passion. Evelyn Underhill makes out this point very well while comparing ^{Christian} mysticism with the mysticism of Plotinus and the Neo-platonic school. What she says of the Neo-platonic school can, with equal force, be stated about oriental mysticism(52) and the distinction made between Neo-platonism and Christian mysticism holds good also in respect of Oriental mysticism on the one hand and Christian mysticism on the other. She says:

"Yet the very closeness with which all these mystics follow those parts of the Neo-platonic doctrine which appeal to them, makes it possible for us to measure

the distance which separates their minds, their tone and temper, from that of Plotinus and his school. The calm, the austerity of thought, the emphasis on beauty, the clear cool light of the Intelligible World have departed. These men see philosophy through a haze of Christian feeling. Their work is full of passionate effort; is centred on the idea of sacrifice and pain. Their religion is coloured by sharp Christian consciousness of sin, and by the difficulty - never squarely faced - of reconciling devotion to a personal redeemer, with the mystical passion for the Absolute(53)".

(c) Both the Vedanta and the Yoga schools of Eastern mysticism are theistic no doubt, but there is no theology in them. In the Vedanta, the emphasis is on understanding that nothing exists except God; it has a doctrine of monism. The Yoga school is actually a school of experimental psychology. It studies the behaviour of the mind and prescribes actual exercises for achieving the state of ecstasy (standing out of the body and the lower psychic vehicles) in which one sees the vision of truth. Eastern mysticism is philosophical and psychological; it has no theology. Christian mysticism is deeply religious and theological and its philosophy is coloured by this bias. This is not to the disadvantage of Christian mysticism; the emotional basis makes it generally very vivid and colourful.

(d) Another point of distinction between Oriental

mysticism and Christian mysticism that I should like to indicate is the difference between the two in their attitude to vision and ecstasy. In Oriental mysticism, the visions come in the high state of ecstasy, which we have seen is the goal of Samādhī, or contemplation. The condition in which the mystic sees the visions is the beatific state of trance contemplation. In Christian mysticism, not much value is put on ecstasy and vision. The visions are seen by Christian mystics at a comparatively early stage and are only regarded as encouragement to neophytes. Dean Inge in his Bampton Lectures on Christian Mysticism makes this point clear. Speaking of visions, he says:

"But we do not find that the masters of the spiritual life attached very much importance to them, or often appealed to them as aids to faith. As a rule, visions were regarded as special rewards bestowed by the goodness of God on the struggling saint, and especially on the beginner, to refresh him and strengthen him in his hour of need. Very earnest cautions were issued that no efforts must be made to induce them artificially, and aspirants were exhorted neither to desire them, nor to feel pride in having seen them. The spiritual guides of the Middle Ages were well aware that such experiences often come of disordered nerves and weakened digestion; they believed also that they are sometimes delusions of Satan...Self-induced visions inflate us with pride, and do irreparable injury to health of mind and body(54)".



Probably the kind of visions seen is not identical in each case, yet even when allowance has been made for that, this difference in attitude towards the visions seen by the mystics remains an important point of distinction between the two schools of mystical philosophy.

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CHAPTER III.Neo-Platonism.

In this chapter, I propose to summarise some of the main ideas of the Neo-Platonic mystic philosophy, just as in the previous one a brief resume of Oriental mysticism was attempted. My aim in presenting the doctrines of Neo-Platonism is not so much a systematic exposition of Neo-Platonic philosophy as to bring out those ideas in this school of thought which have similarity with Oriental mysticism on the one hand and a bearing on the philosophy of English Romantic poets on the other. I will discuss the relevant points according to the same scheme and, as far as possible, under the same headings as in the case of Oriental mysticism. This will make the comparison between the two easier. For the illustration of Neo-Platonic thought I shall draw chiefly upon the Enneads of Plotinus. Plotinus is the most brilliant as well as an authoritative exponent of Neo-Platonic philosophy. For my illustrations from Plotinus, the English translation of the Enneads by Stephen Mackenna will be made use of.

SECTION I.God.

(a). THE TRANSCENDENT:- The Absolute Godhead is above our highest power of cognition. He

transcends all qualities and limitations. To attribute any quality to Him will be to limit Him and hence a mistake. Plotinus calls Him The One and asserts that nothing can be affirmed of Him. He prefers to use 'It' rather than 'He' about The One.

" Certainly this Absolute is none of the things of which it is the source- its nature is that nothing can be affirmed of it- not existence, not essence, not life- since it is ~~That~~ which transcends all these. But possess yourself of it by the very elimination of Being and you hold a marvel."(1).

Thus, we can speak of the Transcendent only in negatives:

" How, then, do we ourselves come to be speaking of it ?
No doubt we deal with it, but we do not state it; we have neither knowledge nor intellection of it.
But in what sense do we even deal with it when we have no hold upon it ?
We do not, it is true, grasp it by knowledge, but that does not mean that we are utterly void of it; we hold it not so as to state it, but so as to be able to speak about it. And we can and do state what it is not, while we are silent about what it is...."(2).

The only definition of the Transcendent that Plotinus thinks possible is "the indefinable." He is "in agony for a true expression," but realises that he is "talking of the untellable" and so any expression will be only a makeshift. Even the ~~term~~ "The One," he says, "was never intended for more than a preliminary affirmation of absolute

simplicity to be followed by the rejection of even that statement." If we think that though we cannot speak about The One, we can at least see its form in a vision, that too is a vain hope because it is altogether formless.

"If we are led to think positively of The One, name and thing, there would be more truth in silence: the designation, a mere aid to enquiry, was never intended for more than a preliminary affirmation of absolute simplicity to be followed by the rejection of even that statement: it was the best that offered, but remains inadequate to express the Nature indicated. For this is a principle not to be conveyed by any sound; it cannot be known on any hearing but, if at all, by vision; and to hope in that vision to see a form is to fail of even that."(3)

In passage after passage, remarkable alike for eloquence and dialectic, Plotinus deals with the utter transcendence and complete self-sufficiency of The One. We have to look for the First of things, which must be beyond every distinction and characteristic.

"But this Unoriginating, what is it? We can but withdraw, silent, hopeless, and search no further. What can we look for when we have reached the furthest? Every enquiry aims at a first and, that attained, rests. Besides, we must remember that questioning deals with the nature of a thing, its quality, its cause or its essential being. In this case the being- in so far as we can use the word- is knowable only by its sequents: the question as to cause asks for a principle beyond, but the principle of all has no principle; the question as to quality would be looking for an attribute in that which has none: the question

as to nature shows only that we must ask nothing about it but merely take it into the mind if we may, with the knowledge gained that nothing can be permissibly connected with it."(4)

The same idea is expressed again, with great force and clarity, in the following:

"Think of The One as Mind or as God, you think too meanly; use all the resources of understanding to conceive this Unity and, again, it is more authentically one than God, even though you reach for God's unity beyond the unity the most perfect you can conceive. For This is utterly a self-existent, with no concomitant whatever. This self-sufficing is the essence of its unity. Something there must be supremely adequate, autonomous, all-transcending, most utterly without need.....

To what could its Intellection be directed ? To itself ? But that would imply a previous ignorance; it would be dependent upon that Intellection in order to knowledge of itself; but it is the self-sufficing. Yet this absence of self-knowing does not comport ignorance; ignorance is of something outside- a knower ignorant of a knowable- but in the Solitary there is neither knowing nor anything unknown".(5).

Thus, according to Plotinus in the passage quoted above, The One is so utterly transcendent that it is not only unknowable by us, but it does not even know itself for the reason that it is above the need of even knowing itself. Why should the Most Supreme Existent be under the necessity of knowing itself ? That would make its existence dependent upon self-knowledge, but it is above all dependence and its existence is altogether unconditioned. The idea

of transcendence of the Godhead reaches the climax here; it can not be taken further by any kind of dialectic.

(b) THE IMMANENT:- The Transcendent, The One, is the only True and Authentic Existent. Nothing can exist in isolation from it. According to the philosophical system of Plotinus, the entire creation is The One in immanence. Emanation is the overflowing of The One, the irradiation from it.

"And what will such a Principle essentially be ?

The potentiality of the Universe: the potentiality whose non-existence would mean the non-existence of all the Universe and even of the Intellectual-Principle which is the Primal Life and all Life.

This Principle on the thither side of Life is the cause of Life- for that Manifestation of Life which is the Universe of things is not the First Activity; it is itself poured forth, so to speak, like water from a spring.

Imagine a spring that has no source outside itself; it gives itself to all the rivers, yet is never exhausted by what they take, but remains always integrally as it was; the tides that proceed from it are at one within it before they run their several ways, yet all, in some sense, know beforehand down what channels they will pour their streams. Or:- think of the Life coursing throughout some mighty tree while yet it is the stationary Principle of the whole, in no sense scattered over all that extent but, as it were, vested in the root: it is the giver of the entire and manifold life of the tree, but remains unmoved itself, not manifold but the Principle of that manifold life".(6).

"Given this immobility in the Supreme, it can neither have yielded assent nor uttered decree nor stirred in any way towards the

existence of a secondary. What happened, then ? What are we to conceive as rising in the neighbourhood of that immobility ? It must be a circumradiation- produced from the Supreme but from the Supreme unaltering- and may be compared to the brilliant light encircling the sun and ceaselessly generated from that unchanging substance". (7).

Though the entire creation emanates from The One, this does not impair the Transcendence of the Absolute. With a wonderful dialectical skill, Plotinus argues that the contained is ever within the container, but the container of all cannot be possessed by any. He says:

"That Source, having no prior, cannot be contained: uncontained by any of those other forms of being, each held within the series of priors, it is orb'd round all, but so as not to be pointed off to hold them part for part; it possesses but is not possessed. Holding all- though itself nowhere held- it is omnipresent, for where its presence failed something would elude its hold. At the same time, in the sense that it is nowhere held it is not present: thus it is both present and not present; not present as not being circumscribed by anything; yet, as being utterly unattached, not inhibited from presence at any point. That inhibition would mean that the First was determined by some other being; the later series, then, would be without part in the Supreme; God has His limit and is no longer self-governed but mastered by inferiors.

While the contained must be where its container is, what is uncontained by place is not debarred from any: for, imagine a place where it is not and evidently some other place retains it; at once it is contained and there is an end of its placelessness". (8)

(c) THE ONE-MANY: THE MANY-ONE:- The manifestation

of diversity is the result of the immanence of The One, because "what comes from the Supreme cannot be identical with it". The One, by reason of progressive emanation, becomes a multiplicity, yet this multiplicity depends for its existence upon the Unity. Therefore the multiplicity is not real manifoldness, but only One-that-is-many. At a lower level, the multiplicity is a fact, but viewed essentially, the multiplicity is illusory, is non-existent. The Unity is the only Authentic Existent.

"A single, unmanifold emanation we may very well allow- how even that can come from a pure unity may be a problem, but we may always explain it on the analogy of the irradiation from a luminary- but a multitudinous production raises question.

The explanation is, that what comes from the Supreme cannot be identical with it and assuredly cannot be better than it- what could be better than The One or the utterly transcendent? The emanation, then, must be less good, that is to say, less self-sufficing: now what must that be which is less self-sufficing than The One? Obviously the Not-One, that is to say, multiplicity but a multiplicity striving towards unit; that is to say, a One-that-is-many....

In virtue of the unity manifested in its variety it exhibits, side by side, both an all-embracing identity and the existence of the secondary: all the variety lies in the midst of a sameness, and identity cannot be separated from diversity since all stands as one; each item in that content, by the fact of participating in life, is a One-many: for the item could not make itself manifest as a One-and-all.

Only the Transcendent can be that; it is

the great beginning, and the beginning must be a really existent One, wholly and truly One, while its sequent, poured down in some way from the One, is all, a total which has participation in unity and whose every member is similarly all and one". (9).

If we are climbing downwards from the Authentic Existent into the realms of emanation, we find ever-widening multiplicity; if, on the other hand, we climb up from the universe of manifestation to its source, we are left only with the One.

SECTION II.

The Universe.

(a) The Constitution of the Universe:- By its very constitution, the universe, being but an outflow from the Divine, is nothing but divine. It is never identical with the Divine, because nothing can be equal to The One, but it is not separate or different from The One either. The cause is effectively present in the effect and the effect too is potentially present in the cause.

According to Plotinus, The One has produced the Intellectual-Principle (the Divine Mind in which the Ideas of all things exist in their archetypal form) and the Intellectual-Principle, in its turn, has produced the Soul. The sensible world is the creation of the Soul. As each sequent exists in and is linked up with its prior, it

follows that the whole creation down to the lowest level, is a chain linked up with The One.

"The One is all things and no one of them; the source of all things is not all things; all things are its possession... Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new: this product has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so an Intellectual-Principle... The second outflow is a Form or Idea representing the Divine Intellect as the Divine Intellect represented its own prior, The One. This active power sprung from essence (from the Intellectual-Principle considered as Being) is Soul... This image of Soul is Sense and Nature, the Vegetal principle. Nothing, however, is completely severed from its prior... there is from the first principle to ultimate an outgoing in which unfailingly each principle retains its own seat while its offshoot takes another rank, a lower...". (10).

Emanating from The One, the source and fountain-head of all life, the universe itself is a single living being. In spite of its vastness, the entire universe is one organism, one animal. Just as in one living organism, all parts are limbs of a single whole, so all the diverse objects in the universe are constituents of a single living whole. And there is the same sympathy and power of affecting one another between all objects in the universe as between cells of one organism. Not only spiritually, but even physically, the universe is one unity of life.

"The secret is: firstly, that this All

is one universally comprehensive living being, encircling all the living beings within it, and having a soul, one soul, which extends to all its members in the degree of participant membership held by each; secondly, that every separate thing is an integral part of this All by belonging to the total material fabric- unrestrictedly a part by bodily membership, while, in so far as it has also some participation in the All-Soul, it possesses in that degree spiritual membership as well, perfect where participation is in the All-Soul alone, partial where there is also a union with a lower soul.

But, with all this gradation, each several thing is affected by all else in virtue of the common participation in the All, and to the degree of its own participation.

This One-All, therefore, is a sympathetic total and stands as one living being; the far is near; it happens as in one animal with its separate parts: talon, horn, finger, and any other member are not continuous and yet are effectively near; intermediate parts feel nothing, but at a distant point the local experience is known. Correspondent things not side by side but separated by others placed between, the sharing of experience by dint of like condition- this is enough to ensure that the action of any distant member be transmitted to its distant fellow. Where all this is a living thing summing to a unity there is nothing so remote in point of place as not to be near by virtue of a nature which makes of the one living being a sympathetic organism".(11)

The universe is alive as a whole and every single thing in it is animated. It is one continuum of life and cannot be bisected into categories of the living and the non-living; even where animation seems to be lacking, there certainly is life existing, though in a hidden form.

"We cannot think of the universe as a soulless habitation, however vast and varied, a thing of materials easily told off, kind by kind- wood and stone and whatever else there be, all blending into a kosmos: it must be alert throughout, every member living by its own life, nothing that can have existence failing to exist within it.

And here we have the solution of the problem, 'How an ensouled living form can include the soulless': for this account allows grades of living within the whole, grades to some of which we deny life only because they are not perceptibly self-moved: in the truth, all of these have a hidden life; and the thing whose life is patent to sense is made up of things which do not live to sense, but, none the less, confer upon their resultant total wonderful powers towards living. Man would never have reached to his actual height if the powers by which he acts were the completely soulless elements of his being; similarly the All could not have its huge life unless its every member had a life of its own...".(12).

Not only is the universe alive at every point, it is also everywhere awake. Every little thing is sentient and intelligent. Nothing is without mind though, of course, there are varying degrees of intellection. If, in comparison to man, mind seems to be practically non-existent in stone, man's own intellect is incomparably inferior to that of a god. The fact is that nothing in the universe is unendowed with life and reason.

"We must reflect that since the many forms of lives are movements- and so with the Intellections- they cannot be identical; there must be different lives, distinct intellections, degrees of lightness

and clarity: there must be firsts, seconds, thirds, determined by nearness to the Firsts. This is how some of the Intellections are gods, others of a secondary order having what is here known as reason, while others again belong to the so-called unreasoning: but what we know here as unreasoning was There a Reason-Principle; the unintelligent was an Intellect; the Thinker of Horse was Intellect and the Thought, Horse, was an Intellect...

No: the thing is not unintelligent; it is Intelligence in a particular mode, corresponding to a particular aspect of Life; and just as life in whatever form it may appear remains always life, so Intellect is not annulled by appearing in a certain mode". (13).

Thus, every atom is alive, sentient and divine. Moreover, as divinity cannot be parcelled out into fragments, each atom possesses divinity in all its fullness. The Divine is present in its entirety and in its infinite potency everywhere in the universe. Such is the majesty of the atom: it is the minutest of the minute, but it holds the power of the sum of things entire; each atom is the centre of the universe.

"Being, then, is present to all Being; an identity cannot tear itself asunder; the omnipresence asserted of it must be presence within the realm of Being; that is, it must be a self-presence. And it is in no way strange that the omnipresence should be at once self-abiding and universal; this is merely saying omnipresence within a unity.

It is our way to limit Being to the sense-known and therefore to think of omnipresence

in terms of the concrete; in our over-estimate of the sensible, we question how that other Nature can reach over such vastness; but our great is small, and this, small to us, is great; it reaches integrally to every point of our universe- or, better, our universe, moving from every side and in all its members towards this, meets it everywhere as the omnipresent All ever stretching beyond....

Wherever the body of the universe may touch, there it finds this All; it strives for no further advance, willing to revolve in that one circle, since to it that is the All and in that movement its every part embraces the All.

If that higher were itself in place there would be the need of seeking that precise place by a certain right path; part of seeker must touch part of sought, and there would be far and near. But since there is no far and near there must be, if presence at all, presence entire. And presence there indubitably is; this highest is present to every being of those that, free of far and near, are of power to receive".(14).

"Nor does the placelessness of Being make it surprising that it be present universally to things of place; on the contrary, the wonder would be- the more than wonder, the impossibility- if from a place of its own it were present to other things in their place, or if having place it were present at all- and, especially present, as we assert integrally.

But set it outside of place, and reason tells us that it will be present entire where it is present at all and that, present to the total, it must be present in the same completeness to every several unity; otherwise something of it is here and something there and at once it is fragmentary, it is body".(15).

Plotinus is not merely a master of dialectics, but being a Pythagorean, he is also a mathematician

and he sets forth the same idea as a mathematical proposition in the following:

"Often for the purpose of exposition- as a help towards stating the nature of the produced multiplicity- we use the example of many lines radiating from one centre; but while we provide for individualisation we must carefully preserve mutual presence. Even in the case of our circle we need not think of separated radii; all may be taken as forming one surface: where there is no distinction even upon the one surface but all is power and reality undifferentiated, all the beings may be thought of as centres uniting at one central centre: we ignore the radial lines and think of their terminals at that centre, where they are at one. Restore the radii; once more we have lines, each touching a generating centre of its own, but that centre remains coincident with the one first centre; the centres all unite in that first centre and yet remain what they were, so that they are as many as are the lines to which they serve as terminals; the centres themselves appear as numerous as the lines starting from them and yet all those centres constitute a unity". (16).

(b) Is the Universe Real ? :- Plotinus never challenges the reality of the universe; being an emanation from the Most Authentic Existent, its reality cannot be a matter of doubt. But he does challenge the materiality of the physical universe. What appears to us as material is not really so, because Matter itself is not truly a material substance. The physical universe, therefore, is practically a subjective mental construction of the individual.

Guthrie sums up Plotinus's attitude towards Matter as follows:

"Matter itself is formless stuff and without quality. It is not size, but that which size makes (space); it is not measure, but measure assumes it unto itself. It is not bodily; it is 'Asomatos'. It is not Being; it is only possibility of Being. It is a weak image, shadow and declension of the spiritual. It is unsatisfied yearning after Being. It is the thought of nothing...

Since Being and Thought are identical, the lowest form of being is also the lowest form of what is intelligible. Therefore, matter is still being, and is still intelligible in its nature. This is the marrow of the contention of the Idealists, that matter is in itself intelligible". (17).

Dean W.R. Inge, in his Gifford Lectures on The Philosophy of Plotinus, deals with the Plotinian view of Matter as given below:

"But in Plotinus...it(i.e. matter) is not material. It is in fact a mere abstraction, a name for the bare receptacle of Forms; the subject of energy, as we should say, viewed by abstraction as separated from the energy which alone gives it being and reality. The most modern physics is approximating, it would seem, to the ancient notion of Matter. The particles of which molecules consist have been divided into atoms, corpuscles, and electrons, till they are on the point of vanishing altogether except as the subjects of electrical energy... It is constant only in change; it is invisible in itself, escaping him who wishes to see it. When one is not looking at it, it is there; when one gazes at it, it is not seen....

From this it might be inferred that Matter, as an object of thought, is nothing more than a delusive appearance, which vanishes, as such, when the Soul is 'awake'. Plotinus would accept this statement; Matter has no reality; but the activity of the irrational Soul which produces these phantasms is none the less a fact. In denying reality to Matter, we do not affirm

that it is absolutely non-existent...

Proclus is more emphatic in rejecting the dualistic interpretation of Matter. Matter, he says, cannot struggle against the Good, since it cannot act in any way. It is not disordered movement; for movement implies force, and Matter has none. It is not the evil principle, since it is an essential part of the composition of the world, and is derived from the One. It is not 'necessity,' though it is necessary. What then is it? Take away order from everything that is orderly, and what remains is Matter. It is that which, if it had any active power, which it has not, would produce disintegration in that which is integrated, disconnection in that which is connected. It is in a word that which is no thing, though not absolutely nothing; it is a 'true lie'. (Proclus, Comm. in Alcib. 2. 219, 251. Bouillet, Vol.1. p.485)".(18).

In the sense, therefore, as held by Proclus, that Matter is no thing, but a 'true lie', the material universe can also be described as a 'true lie'.

(c) Evil:- There is nothing really evil. When a thing appears to us as evil, it is not that it lacks goodness entirely, but we want it to possess more goodness than it does. This is an unfair expectation, because there must be varying or even all degrees of good in the universe. All parts of a whole cannot be equal in values; to wish to do away with things which appear to be evil is like wanting to cut away certain parts from a whole.

"In this demand for more good than exists, there is implied a failure to recognise

that the form allotted to each entity is sufficient in itself; it is like complaining because one kind of animal lacks horns. We ought to understand both that the Reason-Principle must extend to every possible extent and, at the same time, that every greater must include lesser things, that to every whole belong its parts, and that all cannot be equality unless all part is to be absent". (19).

The universe, as a whole, is a harmony and we find discord only if we take a partial and not a total view of things. There must be all degrees of differences in the universe, which implies that there must be even contrarieties, and these differences and contrarieties are necessary to produce the stability of the sum-total, its self-accordant unity.

"At war with itself in the parts which it now exhibits, it has the unity, or harmony, of a drama torn with struggle. The drama, of course, brings the conflicting elements to one final harmony, weaving the entire story of the clashing characters into one thing; while in the Logos the conflict of the divergent elements rises within the one element, the Reason-Principle: the comparison therefore is rather with a harmony emerging directly from the conflicting elements themselves, and the question becomes what introduces clashing elements among these Reason-Principles.

Now in the case of music, tones high and low are the product of Reason-Principles which, by the fact that they are Principles of harmony, meet in the unit of Harmony, the absolute Harmony, a more comprehensive Principle, greater than they and including them as its parts. Similarly in the Universe at large we find contraries - white and black, hot and cold, winged and wingless,

footed and footless, reasoning and unreasoning- but all these elements are members of one living body, their sum-total; the Universe is a self-accordant entity, its members everywhere clashing but the total being the manifestation of a Reason-Principle. That one Reason-Principle, then, must be the unification of conflicting Reason-Principles whose very opposition is the support of its coherence and, almost, of its Being.

And indeed, if it were not multiple, it could not be a Universal Principle, it could not even be at all a Reason-Principle; in the fact of its being a Reason-Principle is contained the fact of interior difference. Now the maximum of difference is contrariety; admitting that this differentiation exists and creates, it will create difference in the greatest and not in the least degree; in other words, the Reason-Principle, bringing about differentiation to the uttermost degree, will of necessity create contrarieties: it will be complete only by producing itself not in merely diverse things but in contrary things". (20).

We should also know that what appears as suffering might not be real suffering at all. The universe is one vast stage and its creatures are participants in a cosmic drama. The show is not the reality. An actor who appears to be suffering on the stage does not suffer in fact. Outward things affect us only outwardly; our real being remains unaffected.

"Men directing their weapons against each other- under doom of death yet neatly lined up to fight as in the pyrrhic sword-dances of their sport- this is enough to tell us that all human intentions are but play, that death is nothing terrible, that to die in a war or in a fight is but to taste a little beforehand what old age has in store, to go away earlier and come back the sooner.

So for misfortunes that may accompany life, the loss of property, for instance; the loser will see that there was a time when it was not his, that its possession is but a mock boon to the robbers, who will in their turn lose it to others, and even, that to retain property is a greater loss than to forfeit it.

Murders, death in all its guises, the reduction and sacking of cities, all must be to us just such a spectacle as the changing scenes of a play; all is but the varied incident of a plot, costume on and off, acted grief and lament. For on earth, in all the succession of life, it is not the Soul within but the Shadow outside of the authentic man, that grieves and complains and acts out the plot on this world stage which men have dotted with stages of their own constructing. All this is the doing of man knowing no more than to live the lower and outer life, and never perceiving that, in his weeping and in his graver doings alike, he is but at play; to handle austere matters austere is reserved for the thoughtful: the other kind of man is himself a futility. Those incapable of thinking gravely read gravity into frivolities which correspond to their own frivolous Nature. Anyone that joins in their trifling and so comes to look on life with their eyes must understand that by lending himself to such idleness he has laid aside his own character. If Socrates himself takes part in the trifling, he trifles in the outer Socrates.

We must remember, too, that we cannot take tears and laments as proof that anything is wrong; children cry and whimper where there is nothing amiss". (21).

SECTION III.

Man.

(a) The Soul:- The Soul is the real man; the body is merely the instrument, the tool with which

he works. The soul is concerned with and affected by the body only to the extent that a worker is concerned with and affected by his tool. The soul is immortal, impassive, unchangeable. It is self-existent and above all desires, griefs and joys. The affections and experiences of the body do not matter to it in any real sense.

"....indeed, we may think of the Soul as an immortal,-if the immortal, the imperishable, must be impassive, giving out something of itself but itself taking nothing from without except for what it receives from the Existents prior to itself from which Existents, in that they are nobler, it cannot be sundered... And how could the Soul lend itself to any admixture? An essential is not mixed. Or of the intrusion of anything alien? If it did, it would be seeking the destruction of its own nature. Pain must be equally far from it. And Grief- how or for what could it grieve? Whatever possesses Existence is supremely free, dwelling, unchangeable, within its own peculiar nature. And can any increase bring joy, where nothing, not even anything good, can accrue? What such an Existent is, it is unchangeably".(22).

"Now from this relation, from the Soul using the body as an instrument, it does not follow that the Soul must share the body's experiences: a man does not himself feel all the experiences of the tools with which he is working".(23)

"Under such an interweaving, then, the Soul would not be subjected to the body's affections and experiences: it would be present rather as Ideal-Form in Matter.

Let us then suppose Soul to be in body as Ideal-Form in Matter. Now if- the first possibility- the Soul is an essence, a self-existent, it can be present only as

separable form and will therefore all the more decidedly be the Using-Principle (and therefore unaffected)...

Compare the passage (in Plato) where we read that 'it is absurd to suppose that the Soul weaves'; equally absurd to think of it as desiring, grieving. All this is rather in the province of something which we may call the Animate". (24).

"Thus in spite of all, the Soul is at peace as to itself and within itself: all the changes and all the turmoil we experience are the issue of what is subjoined to the Soul, and are, as we have said, the states and experiences of this elusive 'Couplement'". (25).

The individual soul is like a ray of the Authentic Existent. This ray is never cut off from the source and each soul, in a way, "contains all souls and all intelligences". There is really no fundamental difference between the individual soul and the Over-Soul which is integrally present in all souls.

"Under the theory of presence by powers, souls are described as rays; the source remains self-locked and these are flung forth to impinge upon particular living things". (26).

"The one soul reaches to the individual but nonetheless contains all souls and all intelligences; this, because it is at once a unity and an infinity; it holds all its content as one yet with each item distinct, though not to the point of separation. Except by thus holding all its content as one- life entire, soul entire, all intelligence- it could not be infinite; since the individualities are not fenced off from each other, it remains still one thing. It was to hold life not single but infinite and yet one life, one in the sense not of an aggregate built up but of the retention

of the unity in which all rose. Strictly, of course, it is a matter not of the rising of the individuals but of their being eternally what they are; in that order, as there is no beginning, so there is no apportioning except as an interpretation by the recipient. What is of that realm is the ancient and primal; the relation to it of the thing of process must be that of approach and apparent merging with always dependence". (27).

(b) The Constitution (Bodies) of Man:- Plotinus

holds that there are seven elements in the constitution of man. These seven elements correspond to the Seven Realms of which Reality consists and man, therefore, can have experiences of all realms of Reality, from the highest to the lowest. It is in this sense that man is a microcosm, or 'Panta' i.e. all. In the average man the higher faculties are in a latent state; as man rises in spirituality by philosophic discipline, his higher faculties become vivified and he progressively gets the power of functioning consciously on the higher planes of existence. Guthrie has summarised the Plotinian theory on the subject as follows:

"Every human soul is the unity of the following seven elements:

1. 'Ho Theos', The God.
2. 'Nous Koinos', Universal Mind.
3. 'Nous Idios', Individual Mind.
4. 'Logos, Dianoia', Reason.
5. 'To Aisthetikon Meros', The psychophysical mechanism of sensation.
6. 'To Phutikon Meros', Vegetable life.
7. 'To Soma', The form, body, matter...

The first four of these psychological ele-

ments compose the 'Psuche' or soul; the later three compose the body, the 'Eidolon Psuches' or image of the body. The body is furnished to us, as we shall see, by the World-Soul, called the 'lunar gods'. The Soul is alone ourselves; it is created by God. It is divided into two parts; the ideal, and rational soul. The rational soul is composed of reason and individual mind which faculties are realized in almost every soul; the ideal soul consists of the two highest faculties that are in many souls latent, or undeveloped...

While the soul is incarnate, all the seven faculties are indissolubly bound together; and the bond is broken only at death, when the soul abandons the body as an old dress...

We must remember that for Plotinus to know a thing, and to become one with it were identical terms. Therefore we can become one with whatever we know: and as we have a God-consciousness, the life of contemplation is the highest of all possible lives for it means that we shall come to know God.

As a consequence of this we epitomize the universe, when incarnate, by having organs by which we can come into communication with every one of the Seven Realms of which the world consists, therefore man is 'Panta' all; he is a 'Kosmos Noetos', an intelligible world'. (28).

(c) Death:- We have seen in the extract from Guthrie given just above that Plotinus considers death to be casting off of an old dress. Elsewhere (Enneads, III.2.15) Plotinus says that "death is nothing terrible, that to die in a war or in a fight is but to taste a little beforehand what old age has in store, to go away earlier and come back the sooner... death in all its guises... must be to us just such

a spectacle as the changing scenes of a play; all is but the varied incident of a plot, costume on and off, acted grief and lament".(29). This process of birth and death continues till the higher soul of man is emancipated by philosophic discipline from its couplement with his lower vehicles (and hence from the necessity of re-incarnation) and re-merges with the Over-Soul.

"But on the dissolution of the body ?

So long as the image-soul has not been discarded, clearly the higher will be where that is; if, on the contrary, the higher has been completely emancipated by philosophic discipline, the image-soul may very well go alone to that lower place, the authentic passing uncontaminated into the Intellectual, separated from that image but nonetheless the soul entire.

Let the image- offspring of the individuality- fare as it may, the true soul when it turns its light upon itself, chooses the higher and by that choice blends into the All, neither acting now nor extinct".(30).

Death is nothing to be afraid of, but nothing much is to be expected of it either, because, after some time we come back to incarnation again. Yet, during the period that the soul is out of incarnation, it is free from its couplement with the lower sheaths or bodies. Being thus unencumbered by the muddy vesture of decay, it is nearer to the higher realms of life, closer to its Fatherland. Plotinus holds that the descent of the soul into body means, to

some extent, a moulting of its feathers and carrying a burden which weighs it down and causes partial numbness of its powers and forgetfulness of its Father. When out of the body, therefore, the soul is nearer to its Fatherland and less forgetful of the Father.

SECTION IV.

The Law of Evolution.

(a) The Evolution of Life Through Form:- Form is the vehicle and receptacle of Life. Life is present everywhere integrally and available in all its plenitude, but each form takes from the reservoir of life only as much as it can contain. There is unstinted offering, but the taking of life is limited by the capacity of the form which is receiving life.

"Now, in beings whose Unity does not reproduce the entire nature of that principle, any presence is presence of an emanent power: even this, however, does not mean that the principle is less than integrally present; it is not sundered from the power which it has uttered; all is offered, but the recipient is able to take only so much. But in Beings in which the plenitude of these powers is manifested, there clearly the Authentic itself is present, though still as remaining distinct". (31)

Life is continually changing forms to gain experience for purposes of evolution. The nature of experiences gained by a living being decides the

nature of the form that that fragment of individualised life will take next. The change is governed by the principles of justice and merit and there is no chance, but the law of universal good provides for as much opportunity of evolution in the next form as is possible.

"In all the changing, there is no change by chance: there is no taking of new forms but to desirable ends and in ways worthy of Divine Powers. All that is Divine executes the Act of its quality; its quality is the expression of its essential Being: and this essential Being in the Divine is the Being whose activities produce as one thing the desirable and the just- for if the good and the just are not produced, there, where, then, have they their being"? (32).

(b) The Law of Retribution and Re-incarnation:- All the inequalities between the conditions of men are of their own making. The universe is governed according to the principles of strictest justice. No man is happy without his meriting happiness and no man suffers without his deserving suffering. For all the wrongs done, retribution is inevitable.

"Punishment naturally follows: there is no injustice in a man suffering what belongs to the condition in which he is; nor can we ask to be happy when our actions have not earned us happiness; the good, only, are happy; divine beings are happy only because they are good". (33).

This law of actions and their consequences determines the conditions of men when they are in a disembodied state after their death.

"Now comes the question of the soul leaving the body; where does it go ?

It cannot remain in this world where there is no natural recipient for it; and it cannot remain attached to anything not of a character to hold it: it can be held here when only it is less than wise, containing within itself something of that which lures it.

If it does contain any such alien element it gives itself, with increasing attachment, to the sphere to which that element naturally belongs and tends.

The space open to the soul's resort is vast and diverse; the difference will come by the double force of the individual condition and of the justice reigning in things. No one can ever escape the suffering entailed by ill deeds done: the divine law is ineluctable, carrying bound up, as one with it, the fore-ordained execution of its doom. The sufferer, all unaware, is swept onward towards his due, hurried always by the restless driving of his errors, until at last wearied out by that against which he struggled, he falls into his fit place and, by self-chosen movement, is brought to the lot he never chose. And the law decrees, also, the intensity and the duration of the suffering while it carries with it, too, the lifting of chastisement and the faculty of rising from those places of pain- all by power of the harmony that maintains the universal scheme". (34).

The conditions during successive incarnations are the cumulated results of actions in the past lives. The souls enter into "body after body- and soon to return- by judgement according to desert".

"Still there is a two-fold flaw: the first lies in the motive of the Soul's descent (its audacity, its Tolma), and the second in the evil it does when act-

ually here: the first is punished by what the soul has suffered by its descent: for the faults committed here, the lesser penalty is to enter into body after body- and soon to return- by judgement according to desert, the word judgement indicating a divine ordinance; but any outrageous form of ill-doing incurs a proportionately greater punishment administered under the surveillance of chastising daimons". (35).

This entering from body to body continues till, by the process of increasing purification and acquiring of virtues, the soul frees itself from the necessity of any further incarnation. All purification implies the soul freeing itself from what is alien to it (the body and the experiences of a lower nature). Plotinus has beautifully described the process of purification:

"So we come to the scope of the purification: that understood, the nature of Likeness becomes clear. Likeness to what Principle ? Identity with what God ?

The question is substantially this: how far does purification dispel the two orders of passion- anger, desire and the like, with grief and its kin- and in what degree the disengagement from the body is possible.

Disengagement means simply that the soul withdraws to its own place.

It will hold itself above all passions and affections. Necessary pleasures and all the activity of the senses it will employ only for medicament and assuagement lest its work be impeded. Pain it may combat, but, failing the cure, it will bear meekly and ease it by refusing assent to it. All passionate action it will check: the suppression will be complete if that be possible, but at worst the Soul will never itself take fire but will keep the involuntary and uncontrolled outside

its own precincts and rare and weak at that". (36).

Purification is the process by which the Soul can free itself from all the lures that the body and the senses are susceptible to. By its means, the soul can retrace its steps to God and return Home. By the time the process of purification is complete, all actions have produced their consequences already; the law of Retribution has no further demands to make and hence no further incarnation is either necessary or possible.

SECTION V.

The Unification of Human and Cosmic Consciousness and the Beatific Vision.

As Stephen Mackenna remarks, "The system of Plotinus is a system of necessary Emanation, Procession or Irradiation accompanied by necessary Aspiration or Reversion-To-Source: all the forms and phases of Existence flow from the Divinity and all strive to return Thither and to remain There". (37). All things having emanated from The One long to return to It, because in this lies their security and also the fulfilment of their ultimate destiny. This return is the law of Nature, forthgoing is followed by incoming. However forgetful the human soul may be, however much it may immerse itself in illusions,

shadows and unrealities of earthly existence, like the prodigal son it must one day return to the Father. The wanderer must come home. By philosophic knowledge the realisation of the soul's true nature and its destiny can be achieved in a comparatively short time and by the practice of spiritual discipline the process of return can be expedited. Guthrie has summarised the stages of philosophic discipline leading to the union with the Divine in Plotinian mysticism as follows;

"The Path of Enlightenment.- This part of the Soul's development is called 'enlightenment', for she is herself a light. This development may be divided into three or seven degrees: I. Purification by virtues; II. Prayer; III. The adorning and purification of the soul; IV. Beginning to be conscious of the intelligible world; V. Perseverance in this course; VI. Full fruition in it; becoming like God, and unable to fall back; VII. Becoming God. Thus the development of every successive faculty, assisted by knowledge of the right doctrine".(37).

While in the human body, the union of the soul with the Divine cannot be everlasting: we can experience this unity very rarely and for certain moments only. It is, however, only after a long period of purification of the body and the emotions and the practice of mental concentration that this state may be attained, though this state by itself means transcending all bodily and mental conditions. Plotinus calls this state ecstasy, that is, standing

out of both the body and the mind. Properly speaking, this is a condition neither of intellection nor of vision, because in both of these activities there is duality; the knower and the known, the seer and the seen. Ecstasy goes beyond all this duality; it is a stage when the knower and the known and the seer and the seen are one and the same; man and God for some moments become identical. By a process of continuous in-drawing within the Self, the individual reaches a point where he ceases to be an individual and is merged with the source and fountain of cosmic Being. Now, let Plotinus himself describe this process of withdrawal and ingathering of human consciousness:

"As Matter, it is agreed, must be void of quality in order to accept the types of the universe, so and much more must the soul be kept formless if there is to be no infixed impediment to prevent it being brimmed and lit by the Primal Principle.

In sum, we must withdraw from all the extern, pointed wholly inwards; no leaning to the outer; the total of things ignored, first in their relation to us and later in the very idea; the self put out of mind in the contemplation of the Supreme; all the commerce so closely there that, if report were possible, one might become to others reporter of that communion...

God- we read- is outside of none, present unperceived to all; we break away from Him, or rather from ourselves; what we turn from we cannot reach; astray ourselves, we cannot go in search of another;

a child distraught will not recognise its father; to find ourselves is to know our source.

Every soul that knows its history is aware, also, that its movement, unthwarted, is not that of an outgoing line; its natural course may be likened to that in which a circle turns not upon some external but on its own centre, the point to which it owes its rise. The soul's movement will be about its source; to this it will hold, poised intent towards that unity to which all souls should move and the divine souls always move, divine in virtue of that movement; for to be a god is to be integral with the Supreme; what stands away is man still multiple, or beast". (39).

After this preparation, the ecstatic moment comes. There is a sudden revelation, for now there is nothing between the soul and God, all that intervenes has been already laid aside. We are, in this moment, lifted above all reasoning and intellection.

"Here, we put aside all the learning; disciplined to this pitch, established in beauty, the quester holds knowledge still of the ground he rests on but, suddenly, swept beyond it all by the very crest of the wave of Intellect surging beneath, he is lifted and sees, never knowing how; the vision floods the eyes with light, but it is not a light showing some other object, the light is itself the vision. No longer is there thing seen and light to show it, no longer Intellect and object of Intellection; this is the very radiance that brought both Intellect and Intellectual object into being for the later use and allowed them to occupy the quester's mind. With This he himself becomes identical, with that radiance whose Act is to engender Intellectual-Principle, not losing in that engendering but for ever unchanged, the engendered coming to be simply because

that Supreme exists. If there were no such principle above change no derivative could rise".(40).

At this moment, man is not man, he is no living being, he is no being at all. He has gone beyond not merely the realm of becoming, but of Being itself. Plotinus describes this supreme moment of ecstasy in the life of the human soul in several passages with such eloquence and literary charm that one feels greatly tempted to quote from quite a number of them, but obviously, the limited space here stands in the way of our yielding to that temptation. I will, however, quote the concluding portion of the Enneads which collects at one place most of the important ideas of Plotinus on this subject. Even in translation into another language, the literary charm of the passage remains so striking.

"This is the purport of that rule of our Mysteries: Nothing Divulged to the Uninitiate: the Supreme is not to be made a common story, the holy things may not be uncovered to the stranger, to any that has not himself attained to see. There were not two; beholder was one with beheld; it was not a vision compassed but a unity apprehended. The man formed by this mingling with the Supreme must- if he only remember- carry its image impressed upon him: he is become the Unity, nothing within him or without inducing any diversity; no movement now, no passion, no outlooking desire, once this ascent is achieved; reasoning is in abeyance and all Intellection and even, to dare the word, the very self: caught away, filled with God, he has in perfect stillness attained isolation; all the

being calmed, he turns neither to this side nor to that, not even inwards to himself; utterly resting he has become very rest. He belongs no longer to the order of the beautiful; he has risen beyond beauty; he has overpassed even the choir of the virtues; he is like one who, having penetrated the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple images behind him—though these become once more first objects of regard when he leaves the holies; for There his converse was not with image, not with trace, but with the very Truth in the view of which all the rest is but of secondary concern.

There, indeed, it was scarcely vision, unless of a mode unknown; it was a going forth from the self, a simplifying, a renunciation, a reach towards contact and at the same time a repose, a meditation towards adjustment. This is the only seeing of what lies within the holies: to look otherwise is to fail.

Things here are signs; they show therefore to the wiser teachers how the Supreme God is known; the instructed priest reading the sign may enter the holy place and make real the vision of the inaccessible.

Even those that have never found entry must admit the existence of that invisible; they will know their source and Principle since by principle they see principle and are linked with it, by like they have contact with like and so they grasp all of the divine that lies within the scope of mind. Until the seeing comes they are still craving something, that which only the vision can give; this Term, attained only by those that have overpassed all, is the All-Transcending.

It is not in the soul's nature to touch utter nothingness; the lowest descent is into evil and, so far, into non-being; but to utter nothing, never. When the soul begins again to mount, it comes not to something alien but to its very self; thus detached, it is not in nothingness but in itself; selfgathered it is no longer

in the order of being; it is in the Supreme.

There is thus a converse in virtue of which the essential man outgrows Being, becomes identical with the Transcendent of Being. The self thus lifted, we are in the likeness of the Supreme: if from that heightened self we pass still higher-image to archetype- we have won the Term of all our journeying. Fallen back again, we waken the virtue within until we know ourselves all order once more; once more we are lightened of the burden and move by virtue towards Intellectual-Principle and through the Wisdom in That to the Supreme.

This is the life of gods and of the godlike and blessed among men, liberation from the alien that besets us here, a life taking no pleasure in the things of earth, the passing of solitary to solitary". (41).

Ecstasy is the consummation of the efforts of the human soul for liberation from its state of separation from the Authentic Existent, which is also the Primal Good and Primal Beauty. It is the point where the flight of the alone to the Alone ends, the goal having been attained. For this flight, we do not need any coach or ship; we have to close our eyes, withdraw within ourselves and leave all that constitutes our individuality behind. This transcendental state is the birth-right of all men, but very few actually work themselves up to their high destiny.

"What then is our course, what the manner of our flight ? This is not a journey for the feet; the feet bring us only from land to land; nor need you think of coach or

ship to carry you away; all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see: you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use".(42).

Plotinus adds:

"'Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland': this is the soundest counsel... The Fatherland to us is There whence we have come, and There is the Father".(43).

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Index of References in Chapter III.

(Note:- Stephen Mackenna's translation of the Enneads of Plotinus was published in The Library of Philosophical Translations by Philip Lee Warner, Publisher to the Medici Society Ltd., London. The five volumes were published in the following years: Vol I. 1917; Vol II 1921; Vol III. 1924; Vol IV. 1926 and Vol V. 1930. In Vol V, B.S. Page collaborated with Stephen Mackenna in making the translation of the portion of the Enneads included in this volume. References given below are to these volumes: S.M. is an abbreviation of Stephen Mackenna.)

- (1) The Enneads. III.8.10, Trans by S.M. Vol. II, p. 134.
- (2) Ibid, V.3.14, Vol. IV, p. 38.
- (3) Ibid, V.5.6, Vol. IV, pp. 54-55.
- (4) Ibid, VI.8.11, Vol. V, p. 224.
- (5) Ibid, VI.9.6, Vol. V, pp. 245-46.
- (6) Ibid, III.8.10, Vol. II, pp. 133.
- (7) Ibid, V.1.6, Vol. IV, p. 8.
- (8) Ibid, V.5.9, Vol. IV, p. 57.
- (9) Ibid, V.3.15, Vol. IV, pp. 38-39.
- (10) Ibid, II.2.1-2, Vol. IV, pp. 16-17.
- (11) Ibid, IV.4.32, Vol. III, pp. 85-86.
- (12) Ibid, IV.4.36, Vol. III, p. 92.
- (13) Ibid, VI.7.9, Vol. V, pp. 173-74.
- (14) Ibid, VI.4.2, Vol. V, pp. 108-109.
- (15) Ibid, VI.4.3, Vol. V, p. 110.
- (16) Ibid, VI.5.5, Vol. V, p. 129.
- (17) Guthrie, The Philosophy of Plotinus, Philadelphia, 1896, p. 44.
- (18) Inge, W.R., The Philosophy of Plotinus, London, 1923, extracts from pp. 128-147.
- (19) The Enneads, III.2.14, Trans by S.M. Vol II, p. 27.
- (20) Ibid, III.2.16, Vol. II, pp. 31-32.
- (21) Ibid, III.2.15, Vol. II, pp. 29-30.
- (22) Ibid, I.1.2, Vol. I, p. 30.
- (23) Ibid, I.1.3, Vol. I, p. 31.
- (24) Ibid, I.1.4, Vol. I, pp. 32-33.
- (25) Ibid, I.1.9, Vol. I, p. 38.
- (26) Ibid, VI.4.3, Vol. V, p. 109.
- (27) Ibid, VI.4.14, Vol. V, p. 122.
- (28) Guthrie, The Philosophy of Plotinus, Philadelphia, 1896, pp. 23-24.

- (29) The Enneads, III.2.15, Trans by S.M., Vol.II.p.29.
- (30) Ibid, VI.4.16, Vol. V. p. 125.
- (31) Ibid, VI.4.3, Vol. V. p. 109
- (32) Ibid, III.2.13, Vol. II. p.27.
- (33) Ibid, III.2.4, Vol. II. p.17
- (34) Ibid, IV.3.24, Vol. III. pp. 36-37.
- (35) Ibid, IV.8.5, Vol. III. pp. 149-50.
- (36) Ibid, I.2.5, Vol. I p. 47.
- (37) Ibid, Vol.I p. 118
- (38) Guthrie, The Philosophy of Plotinus, Philadelphia, 1896, p. 49.
- (39) The Enneads, VI.9.7-8, Trans by S.M., Vol. V. p.247.
- (40) Ibid, VI. 7.36, Vol. V. pp. 204-205
- (41) Ibid, VI. 9.11, Vol. V. pp. 251-53.
- (42) Ibid, I.6.8, Vol. I. pp. 87-88.
- (43) Ibid, I.6.8, Vol. I. p. 87.

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CHAPTER IV.

Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism.

SUB-SECTION I.

Introductory.

In the two foregoing Chapters, I have discussed some salient features of Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonic philosophy. As I made clear before, my main purpose in presenting the two philosophies has been to show their similarity in many essential aspects and to have a background of ideas for the discussion of the thought in English Romantic poetry. Only such ideas as are relevant to this purpose have been taken into account. From the two previous chapters it would appear that there is a remarkable affinity between Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism. In my discussion of these philosophies, I arranged the ideas in the same order and, as far as practicable, under the same headings and a comparison of the two would reveal the agreement that exists between these two systems.

The question that now arises is whether the similarities between Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism are accidental or whether we can trace any links between the two. An attempt will be made below to show the historical and ideological links

that existed between East and West in the ancient world. The treatment of historical data has to be extremely brief; in fact, we can take note of some important landmarks only. The tracing of ideological relationship, besides being concise, has to be limited to spheres which hold some common ground between Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism. The chronology of Neo-Platonism lies between the 3rd. century A.D., and the early decades of the 6th. century A.D., and a bird's eye view of East-West relationship from the ancient times till the 3rd. century A.D. only will be of our present interest. I will begin with the account of historical links and then pass on to the story of ideological kinship.

SUB-SECTION II.

Historical links between East and West from early times down to Neo-Platonic Period.

As said above, we can but make a passing reference to a few facts. The earliest that has come to the light of history about Indian civilisation is what is known as the Indus Valley civilisation which flourished in the fourth millennium B.C. This civilisation has many things in common with the ancient civilisations of Sumer, Egypt and Minos and the eminent archaeologist, Sir John Marshall, who supervised the excavations on the ancient sites of Mohenjodaro and Harappa

in the Indus Valley, alluding to this similarity, says: "each no doubt had its own particular type of civilisation which was adopted to suit local conditions. But between them all was a fundamental unity of ideas which could hardly have been the result of mere commercial intercourse."(1). This points to the existence of cultural as well as commercial ties among these ancient civilisations. The fact that intercourse between the people of the Indus valley and outside world existed in those ancient times is also borne out by the skeletal remains and figurines of several racially distinct types, viz. primitive Australoid, Eurafrian, Alpine, Mongoloid etc., which have been found during excavations on the sites of these ancient cities. We can read an account of these skeletal remains in Professor Childe's New Light on the Most Ancient East.(2).

The mythology and the pantheon of India during the Vedic period (c. 2000 B.C. - c. 1000 B.C.)(3) shows some contact with the West, particularly with Greece. Mithra or Mitra, one of the gods of the Vedic pantheon, had a very long popularity in the West and his cult became extinct only with the rise of Christianity. About the fame of Mithra in the Western World, Radhakrishnan says:

"The fame of Mithra extended to the

borders of the Aegean Sea, and his name was well-known in Ancient Greece. Artaxerxes popularized his worship in his different capitals at Babylon, Damascus, and Sardis, as well as at Susa, Ecbatana, and Persepolis. In Babylon the official clergy (Magi) became more powerful than the indigenous priests. They looked upon Mithra as the mediator between Ormuz, or light, and Ahriman, or darkness. They soon crossed Mesopotamia and penetrated into the heart of Asia Minor. They swarmed into Pontus, Galatia, and Phrygia. After the break-up of the Persian Empire, in the religious fermentation caused by the Macedonian conquest, Mithraism received a definitive form. Hellenic and Iranian beliefs came to be identified; Ahuramazda with Zeus, Verethraghna with Heracles, Anāhita, to whom the bull was consecrated, with Artemis Tauropolos, and Mithra with Helios. The mysteries of Mithra found their way into the Roman Empire. Nero (A.D. 54-68) wished to be initiated into the ceremonies by the Magi. Mithra became linked up with the Great Mother Isis and secured the official protection which the latter enjoyed. Commodus (A.D. 180-92) became an adept and participated in the ceremonies. In A.D. 270 Aurelian won his victories in the name of Mithra. In the year A.D. 307, Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius dedicated at Carnuntum on the Danube a temple to Mithra, 'the protector of their Empire', and the last pagan who occupied the throne of the Caesars, Julian the Apostate, was an ardent votary of Mithra. The worship of Mithra proved the most dangerous rival to the Christian Church before its alliance with Constantine. No wonder Renan observed: 'If Christianity had been stopped in its growth by some deadly disease, the world would have been Mithraist'. Then in the cathedrals the Bull would have supplanted the Cross."(4).

Regarding trade and commerce in these very early times, Radhakrishnan notes:

"Commerce between the mouth of the Indus and the Persian Gulf was unbroken down to Buddhist times. We have evidence of trade by sea between the Phoenicians of the Leva-

nt and western India as early as 975 B.C., when Hiram, King of Tyre, imported 'ivory, apes and peacocks' for decorating the palaces and the temple of King Solomon,(a).

Trade between the Indus valley and the Euphrates seems to be very ancient, for we find in the cuneiform inscriptions of the Hittite kings of Mittani in Cappadocia belonging to the sixteenth or fifteenth century B.C., the names of the Vedic gods Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and the Asvins, whom they call by the Vedic title Nāsatyā. The Hittite kings bore Aryan names.(b)" (5).

Near about the sixth century B.C., India and Greece came into very close relationship because they both formed parts of the Persian Empire which was founded by Cyrus after the fall of Babylon in 538 B.C. Darius I, the successor of Cyrus, extended his empire upto the Indus valley in India and Indian soldiers took part in the invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. During this time, the Greek also came to India and served as military and civil officers. Speaking about these events and the consequent influence of Eastern ideas on the West at that time, Professor Sir Flinders Petrie remarks:

"The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far West the Indian connections were carried; and the discovery of modelled heads of Indians at Memphis, of about the fifth century B.C., shows that Indians were living there for trade,. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West".(6).

(a) 1 Kings x. 22. (b) Cambridge History of India, vol. 1 (1922), p.320.

Commenting on the nature of Indo-Greek relationship during this period, Sir S. Radhakrishnan observes:

"The importance of Indian influence on Greek thought is not to be judged by the amount of information about it which has survived. Eusebius (A.D. 315) preserves a tradition which he attributes to Aristoxenus, the pupil of Aristotle, and a well-known writer on harmonics, that certain learned Indians actually visited Athens and conversed with Socrates.

'Aristoxenus the musician tells the following story about the Indians. One of these men met Socrates at Athens, and asked him what was the scope of his philosophy. "An enquiry into human phenomena", replied Socrates. At this the Indian burst out laughing. "How can we inquire into human phenomena", he exclaimed, "when we are ignorant of divine ones?" '(a).

The date of Aristoxenus is 330 B.C. If Eusebius is to be trusted, we have contemporary evidence of the presence in Athens as early as the fourth century B.C. of Indian thinkers. The visit of the Indian to Athens is also mentioned in the fragment of Aristotle (b) preserved in Diogenes Laertius(c).

Even if these stories are apocryphal, they are legendary formulations of the view of the influence of Indian thought generally accepted in the later Academy.

(a) Praeparatio Evangelica, xi. 3.

(b) 32. "We find in the fragments of Aristotle's lost dialogues, which were mostly written during his earlier period, a surprising interest in certain features of Oriental religion" (Werner Jaeger 'Greeks and Jews', Journal of Religion, April 1938, p.128).

(c) ii. 45. Eudoxus, the astronomer and friend of Plato, was greatly interested in Indian thought. See Pliny, Natural History, xxx. 3.

At any rate, while the popular religion of the Greeks is united to the Vedic beliefs, the mystic tradition of the Orphic and the Eleusinian cults, Pythagoras and Plato, which has had a great development in Greek and Christian thought, started with certain fundamental principles which are common to Indian and Greek mysticism".(7).

The invasion of India by Alexander and the conquest of its north-western territories heralded an era of closer Indo-Greek relationship. Alexander was an enlightened ruler and he was anxious to come into contact with the culture and religious thought of the East. His great ambition was to bring East and West closer to one another.

"Buddhism must have been prevalent in India for over a century before Alexander's time, and he made an effort to acquaint himself with Hindu and Buddhist thought. He sent a Greek officer named Onesicritus, a disciple of Diogenes the cynic philosopher(a), to Taxila, the famous seat of learning, and the latter succeeded in getting an ascetic called Kalanos to join Alexander's entourage. In the feast at Susa which he celebrated on his return from India his great dream of the marriage of Europe and Asia took practical shape. He had already married Roxana, a princess from Bactria, and now he took as a second consort Statira, the daughter of Darius. Nearly a hundred of his superior officers and ten thousand of his humbler followers followed the emperor's example and took Asiatic brides".(8).

Giving an account of post-Alexandrian Indo-Greek links, Radhakrishnan says:

"Alexander left behind him Greek colonists

(a) Strabo, xv, c.715.

and soldiers(a), and in the north-west frontiers for some centuries Greek or semi-Greek principalities continued. In the political unsettlement after Alexander's invasion Chandragupta came to power, overthrew the Macedonian supremacy, and gradually conquered the whole of Hindustan. The Greek prince Seleucus Nikator (third century B.C.) gave one of his daughters in marriage to the Indian sovereign and sent an ambassador to his court at Pataliputra (Patna). Megasthenes, who gives the West an interesting account of the social and cultural conditions of India during his time. 'In many points', he says, 'their teaching agrees with that of the Greeks(a)'. Megasthenes was succeeded by Daimachus of Plataea, who went on a series of missions from Antiochus I to Bindusāra, the son of Chandragupta. Pliny tells us of a certain Dionysius who was sent to India from Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). Asoka, who ascended the throne of Magadha in 270 B.C., held a Council at Pataliputra, when it was resolved to send missionaries to proclaim the new teaching throughout the world. In accordance with this decision Asoka sent Buddhist missions to the sovereigns of the West, Antiochus Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatos of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus(c). From Asoka's statements it may be inferred that his missions were favourably received in these five countries. Between 190 and 180 B.C. Demetrius extended the Bactrian kingdom into India and conquered Sind and Kathiawar. The Greeks who settled in India gradually became Indianized. Of the monuments which survive of the Indo-Greek dynasties is a pillar discovered at Besnagar in the extreme south of the Gwalior State (140 B.C.). The inscription on it in Brāhmī character says:

(a) Cambridge History of India, vol. 1 (1922), pp.419-20.

(b) Nat.Hist. vi.21. (c) Thirteenth Rock Edict.

'This garuda column of Vāsudeva (Visnu) was erected here by Heliodorus, son of Dion, a worshipper of Visnu and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as a Greek ambassador from the great King Antialcidas to King Kāsiputra Bhāgabhadra, the saviour, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship.(a).' By the time of these inscriptions the Greeks born in India became completely Indianized. The greatest of the Indo-Greek kings was Menander, who was converted to Buddhism by the Buddhist teacher Nāgasena (180-160 B.C.). His conversion is recorded in the famous work Milindapanha.(b). About the year 160 B.C. the Scythians, driven from their ancestral homes in central Asia, swept over the Jaxartes and the Oxus, subdued Kabul and the Panjab, and extended their conquests to and established themselves in the valley of the Ganges. With the conversion of one of their most powerful monarchs, Kaniska (first century A.D.), Buddhism entered on a second period of glory and enterprise. Alexander Polyhistor of Asia Minor, according to Cyril of Alexandria, knew a good deal about Buddhism. Clement of Alexandria quotes the work of Polyhistor(c)...Strabo states on the authority of Nicolaus of Damascus that an Indian embassy including a thinker who burnt himself to death at Athens in 20 B.C. was sent

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- (a) We have a Khārośthī inscription on a vase from Swat, of the Greek meridarch Theodorus, who, as a Buddhist, deals with the establishment of some relics of Buddha, and this inscription is probably of the early part of the first century B.C.
- (b) Questions of Milinda, vol.xxv, Sacred Books of the East.
- (c) Stromata, iii. 7.

to Augustus by the Indian king Poros.(a). During all this period India and the West had extensive trade relations. When Alexander chose in Egypt the site for a city which was destined to perpetuate his name, the preparation for the blending of Eastern and Western cultures started. For a thousand years Alexandria continued to be centre of intellectual and commercial activity because it was the meeting-place of Jews, Syrians, and Greeks. Milindapahha mentions it as one of the places to which the Indians regularly resorted".(9).

The gods of the ancient Indian pantheon were also quite well-known to North Syria and Palestine regions where the Jewish religion originated and took its root. Professor S.A.Cook notes:

"In what may roughly be called the 'Mosaic' age, viz, that illustrated by the Amarna letters and the 'Hittite' tablets from Boghaz-keui, Palestine was exposed to Iranian (Old Persian) or Indo-European influence. This was centuries before the days when it was part of the Persian Empire...In the Mosaic Age, Varuna, the remarkable ethical God of ancient India, was known to North Syria, and round about the time of the second Isaiah, the Zoroastrian Ahura-Mazda, doubtless known to the Israelites, was a deity even more spiritual". (10).

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- (a) Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, by M'Crindle (1893), p.389; Strabo, xv. I.73; see also Dion Cass. liv.9. Plutarch refers to the self-immolation in Vit.Alex.69. According to Plutarch, 'the Tomb of the Indian' is one of the sights shown to strangers at Athens. Lightfoot considers that this hero was alluded to by Paul in I Corinthians xiii.3: 'If I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing' (St.Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, 1875, p.156 n.). Cassius Dion(liv.9.10) comments on this self-immolation.

India's relations with Rome and the Roman world were intimate and long-continued. The connections were not merely commercial, but diplomatic and cultural as well. Indian wisdom was held in high esteem, and people of intellectual curiosity and seriousness travelled East as far as India in quest of philosophic knowledge. Indians, in their turn, ventured out in good numbers and came to Rome, Antioch and Alexandria. Alexandria, in particular, was a big meeting-ground of the people of West and East. The distinction between the Brahmanical form of Hinduism and Buddhism was well-known. In the realm of ideas it was not a one-way traffic, there was naturally give and take, and Indians imbibed at Alexandria the scientific knowledge which the West could impart. Radhakrishnan has very well summarised the East-West relationship of this epoch.

"The contacts between India and the West were more frequent in the period of the Roman Empire, especially in the reign of Augustus, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius. The Jatakas contain many references to Buddhist merchants and their adventures in distant lands. Greek and Indian merchants and men of letters met at Antioch, Palmyra, and Alexandria. The Augustan poets refer to the Medes, the Scythians, and the Hindus as being brought under the protecting care of imperial Rome.(a). Indian princes sent embassies to Rome. One of these, from an Indian prince whom

(a) Horace, Carm. iv. 14; Virgil, Aeneid, viii. 680 ff.

Strabo calls Pandion, left Barigaza (Broach) at the mouth of the Narbada and encountered Augustus at Samos four years later.(a). Another Indian embassy went to Rome to congratulate Trajan on his accession in A.D. 99. The Kusan kings of India were on excellent terms with Rome. At Antioch the historian Nicolaus of Damascus encountered the three survivors of an embassy from a monarch bearing the historic name of Porus, on their way to Rome. According to the text of the will of Augustus, as it has been restored from a Greek translation on a monument at Ancyra, communications were quite frequent from Indian princes. Pliny refers to an Indian embassy which arrived at Rome in the reign of Claudius.(b). As the commerce between the Mediterranean and the East was considerable, we need not think that it was confined only to material products. The names of the various imported products - camphor, sulphur, beryl, opal, and the like - show the linguistic influence of India. According to Ptolemy and Dion Cassius, Indians were found in that great emporium of learning, Alexandria.(c). Dion Chrysostom, who lived in the reign of Trajan and died in or after A.D. 117, mentions Indians among those found in Alexandria. In his oration on Homer, he mentions that the Indians, who looked not on the same stars, sang in their own tongue of the woes of Priam and Andromache, of the valour of Hector and Achilles.(d). Apparently he was aware of the existence of the epic Mahābhārata and its resemblance in some of its episodes to the incidents of the Iliad. Lecturing to an Alexandrian audience, he says: 'I see among you not only the Greeks and Italians, Syrians, Libyans and Cilicians and men who dwell more remotely, but also Bactrians, Scythians,

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- (a) Geography, xv.73.
 (b) Nat.Hist.vi.24.
 (c) Asiatic Researches, iii.53.
 (d) Orat. liii.

Persians and some of the Indians who are among the spectators and are always residing there'.(a). India had a reputation for high philosophy and religion in the middle of the second century A.D., for Lucian makes Demetrius, the Greek philosopher, give up his property and depart for India, there to end his life among the Brahmins.(b). The travels of Apollonius of Tyana support this tradition. Clement of Alexandria, who died about A.D. 220, knew the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism. 'There are', he says, 'some Indians who follow the precepts of Boutta, whom, by an excessive reverence, they have exalted into a god'.(c). Clement mentions that Pythagoras learnt from Brahmins among others.(d). St. Jerome (A.D. 340) mentions Buddha by name and quotes the tradition of his virgin birth.(e). In the reign of Constantine, Metrodorus is said to have journeyed to India to study the science and philosophy of the Hindus. He was followed by his friend Meropius of Tyre and his companions Frumentius and Aedisius. Indian embassies continued to be sent to Constantine, Julian, and Justinian. Damascius mentions in his life of Isidore, that certain Brahmins visited Alexandria (A.D. 500) to learn Alexandrian science. In astronomy and geography the Indians owed a great deal to Western science".(11).

It is not within our purview to take note of later East-West contact. It would appear from the brief account given above that East and West mixed and mingled from the earliest time recorded in history down to the 5th century A.D. which is the date by which Neo-Platonism had fully flourished.

(a) Orat. xxxii, quoted in M'Grindle, Ancient India, pp.174-8.

(b) Toxaris, 34. (c) Stromata, 1.15.

(d) Stromata, 1.15. (e) St. Jerome, Contr. Jovin. 1.26

SUB-SECTION III.Ideological kinship between East and West from
early times down to Neo-Platonic Period.(A). Fore-runners of Neo-Platonism.

Neo-Platonism was the culmination of Greek philosophy and naturally enough it was exposed to earlier philosophic traditions which had flourished by its time. Ideas do not spring up in a vacuum; the history of ideas is a record of assimilation of older ideas and progression in a new direction against an existing background. Neo-Platonism too was not a break with the past, but a carrying forward of older philosophic traditions with a new intellectual inquisitiveness. It is a complex web of many threads; we can but unravel a few of them which are relevant to our purpose here. We have to take a brief note of such Pre-Neo-Platonic philosophic and religious movements as influenced Neo-Platonism on the one hand and had something in common with Eastern thought on the other.

(a) Orphism:- Orphism was a transformation of the old Dionysian cult. "The great step that Orpheus took was that, while he kept the old Bacchic faith that man might become a god, he altered the conception of what a God was and he sought to obtain that godhead by wholly different means. The grace he

sought was not physical intoxication but spiritual ecstasy; the means he adopted, not drunkenness but abstinence and rites of purification".(12). In distinct departure from the old anthropomorphic Greek religion, Orpheus introduced the ideas of the immortality of the soul and the exaltation of man to divinity by purification and spiritual ecstasy. The theory of rebirth and of the destiny of man in subsequent lives according to the nature of deeds done by him in previous lives was also inducted. Speaking of the doctrines preached by Orpheus and Pythagoras and their influence on Neo-Platonism, Dean R.W.Inge says:

"Religious and philosophical faith in immortality subsisted quite independently of spiritualistic superstition. Orpheus and Pythagoras, the former a purely mythical character, the latter a historical figure embroidered with legend, were regarded as the first teachers of the true doctrine about the Soul. These two traditions blended almost completely into one, and in the third century it was the Neopythagoreans, with their spiritual kinsfolk, the Neoplatonists, who practised and preached the 'Orphic' religion. The main doctrines of Orphism were the probation of the soul in this life as a preparation for eternity, the need of purification and sacramental initiation as a condition of a blessed immortality, and the rebirth of souls in higher or lower forms, determined by the merits or demerits of the subject in its previous states of existence ...The destiny of the soul is determined in accordance with the most rigorous retributive justice. We choose our company and consort with our likes. Death

is only the transit to that environment which we have made our own. The higher part of the Soul is by nature indestructible; but its immortality may be an immortality of degradation, or blessedness. Such a theory of retribution, which resembles the Karma doctrine of Oriental religions, could dispense with any clear pictures of the future state, when the Soul shall have finally escaped from the 'grievous circle' of births and deaths".(13).

Writing on the same subject, Dr.S.Radhakrishnan observes:

"Orphic religion is different from the anthropomorphic worship of the Greeks. Its adherents are organized in communities based on voluntary admission and initiation. Orphic cosmogony and eschatology are foreign to the Greek spirit. Homer is not troubled by the problem of the origin of things. He knows of no world egg which plays a prominent part in many cosmogonies and in Orphism. Those who are familiar with the Vedic hymn of creation will note that the conceptions of night and chaos and the birth of love, as well as that of the cosmic egg, are accepted by the Orphics.

In later times Orphic theology was studied by Greek philosophers, Eudemus the Peripatetic, Chrysippus the Stoic, and Proclus the Neoplatonist. It became a favourite study of the grammarians of Alexandria. While much of the Orphic literature that has come down to us is of a late date, 'the thin gold plates, with Orphic verses inscribed on them discovered at Thourioi and Petelia, take us back to a time when Orphicism was still a living creed'.(a). 'From them we learn', says Professor Burnet, 'that it has some striking resemblances to the beliefs prevalent in India

(a) Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, 1930, p.82

about the same time', though he finds it 'impossible to assume any Indian influence in Greece at this date'. The beliefs held in common are those of rebirth, the immortality and godlike character of the soul, the bondage of the soul in the body, and the possibility of release by purification. If we add to them metaphors like the wheel of birth and the world egg, the suggestion of natural coincidence is somewhat unconvincing".(14).

The similarity of some of the tenets of Orphism with those of Oriental philosophy and religion has been noticed both by Inge and Burnet in the excerpts reproduced above.

The doctrines of Orphism were largely adopted by the Eleusinian Mystery cult and passed through that channel also to later times.

(b) The Pythagoreans:- The close relationship between Orphism and Pythagoreanism has been indicated in the quotation from Dean Inge given above. Talking further about the Pythagoreans and their influence on Neo-Platonism, Inge says:

"The Pythagoreans of the first two centuries after Christ were so decidedly the precursors of Neoplatonism, that we must give some account of this eclectic system...They conceived of God as both immanent and transcendent...They laid great stress on human immortality. The original doctrine was that the soul of the race is re-incarnated in each generation, passing through the 'wheel' of alternate life and death for ever. This doctrine has no moral significance. But it soon came to be modified by another view, really quite distinct from it, according to which the soul falls through error from its state of purity,

undergoes a long purification from its sins both here and in a purgatorial state hereafter, and at last returns to heaven. With this was combined the doctrine of transmigration or rebirth, incorrectly called metempsychosis. Thus the older idea was moralised, but at the same time changed, since now the individuality of the soul persists from one life to another. And since re-incarnation is always for the sake of punishment or discipline, the 'weary wheel' of existence is regarded as something to be escaped from, a notion which was far from the view of those who, like Heraclitus, maintained the older doctrine.

They were ascetics on principle...It now meant the free exercise of the Soul's highest faculties which leads to spiritual enlightenment. The excitements of emotional religion are merely a hindrance to the attainment of this calm wisdom. Nor should the mortification of the flesh be carried too far; its object is merely to liberate the mind from the importunities of the body.

In almost all its teaching, the resemblance of Pythagoreanism to the later Platonism is very close".(15).

On the question of the connections of Pythagoreanism with Eastern thought, Radhakrishnan writes:

"Herodotus suggests that Pythagoras got the doctrine of rebirth from the Egyptians, (a), but 'the Egyptians did not believe in transmigration at all and Herodotus was deceived by the priests or the symbolism of the monuments'.(b). Even if the theory be a development from the primitive belief in the kinship of men and beasts, it is difficult to account for the other parts of the system, taboos on certain kinds of food, the rule of silence which the members

(a) 11. 123.

(b) Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, 1930, pp.88-89.

of his fraternity were required to observe, the ascetic emphasis and insistence on release assured to those who are initiated. Iamblichus, the biographer of Pythagoras, tells us that he travelled widely, studying the teachings of Egyptians, Assyrians, and Brahmins. (a). Gomperz writes: 'It is not too much to assume that the curious Greek, who was a contemporary of Buddha, and it may be of Zoroaster too, would have acquired a more or less exact knowledge of the East in that age of intellectual fermentation, through the medium of Persia'. (b). (16).

The most important amongst the later Pythagoreans was Apollonius of Tyana who was a contemporary of Christ. His biography by the elder Philostratus has been dubbed as a mixture of history and romance.

(a) Prof. H. G. Rawlinson writes: 'It is more likely that Pythagoras was influenced by India than by Egypt. Almost all the theories, religious, philosophical and mathematical taught by the Pythagoreans, were known in India in the sixth century B.C., and the Pythagoreans, like the Jains and the Buddhists, refrained from the destruction of life and eating meat and regarded certain vegetables such as beans as taboo' (Legacy of India, 1937, p.5.). 'It seems also that the so-called Pythagorean theorem of the quadrature of the hypotenuse was already known to the Indians in the older Vedic times, and thus before Pythagoras' (Ibid). Prof. Winternitz is of the same opinion: 'As regards Pythagoras, it seems to me very probable that he became acquainted with Indian doctrines in Persia' (Vishvabharati Quarterly, Feb. 1937, p.8). It is also the view of Sir William Jones (Works, iii. 236), Colebrooke (Miscellaneous Essays, i. 436ff.), Schroeder (Pythagoras und die Inder), Garbe (Philosophy of Ancient India, pp. 39 ff.), Hopkins (Religions of India, pp. 559-60), and Macdonnell (Sanskrit Literature, p. 422).

(b) Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, vol. 1, p. 127.

The authenticity of some of the supernatural phenomena stated to have been performed by him might be open to question, but there is perhaps little reason to doubt the factual details of his biography given by Philostratus who writes on good authority.

Regarding his travels in India, we read the following account given by Maurice A. Canney in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, on the basis of the biography written by Philostratus.

"Apollonius now decided to go to the East, particularly to India. When he reached Nineveh, he met Damis, who thenceforward became his devoted disciple and companion. Damis told him that he knew the languages of the countries in which they proposed to travel, but Apollonius replied that he knew all tongues, because he could read men's thoughts (i.18). In Babylon he seems to have met the Magi. He also met, and was entertained by, the king, Bardanes, but refused to take part with him in a sacrifice involving the shedding of blood, or to go to the chase with him, regarding the sport as cruel to animals (i.25-38). After visiting the surrounding cities, (i.39), they made for the Indian frontier, and seem to have entered India by the Khyber Pass (ii.6). A guide having conducted them to Taxila (Attock, ii.20), Apollonius was entertained by king Phraotes, who afterwards gave him a letter to Iarchas, the eldest of the wise men (ii.40). Crossing the tributaries of the Indus (ii.43) to the valley of the Ganges (iii.5), they at length reached the goal of their journey, the castle or monastery of the wise men (iii.10). Apollonius was conducted alone by a messenger to the castle (iii.10). Here he was allowed to ask any question he pleased. A messenger was then sent to invite Damis to attend as well. Apollonius, during his stay, besides learning many secrets from these Brahmans or Buddhists, was allowed to witness certain cures. Iarchas touched a cripple and healed him; he also restored sight to a

blind man, and the use of his hand to a paralytic (iii.38). They made the homeward journey partly by ship, going from the Indus to the mouth of the Euphrates (iii.52-58)". (17).

Dean W.R.Inge considers the biography of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus to be in some respects apocryphal, but he also accepts that the teaching attributed to him is of the Indian type. Inge says:

"The life of Apollonius of Tyana, by the elder Philostratus, is one of the most important documents for the history of religion in the third century. The subject of the biography was a contemporary of Christ, a Pythagorean and a religious reformer...Apollonius, we are told, tried everywhere to restore religion to its pristine purity, without attempting to alter any man's manner of worship. He hated bloody sacrifices, and would eat nothing that had lived. He condemned war holding that we have no right to shed blood in any circumstances. Much stress is laid on the 'science' of prayer and sacrifice. The piety of Apollonius, or rather of Philostratus, is on the whole of the Indian type; the hero is recorded to have travelled through India as far as the Ganges valley". (18).

(c) The Essenes:- We get an account of the life and beliefs of the Essenes from Philo who wrote near about A.D. 20 and from Josephus who wrote about fifty years later. The Essenes were strict vegetarians, drank no wine and abstained from animal sacrifices. Their small societies were run on the principles of communism in the matter of earthly possessions. Writing on the subject of the affinity of the mode of life practised by the Essenes and Eastern religions, Radhakrishnan notes;

"Josephus suggests that the Essenes 'practise the mode of life which among the Greeks was introduced by Pythagoras' (Ant.xv.10.4). Lightfoot criticizes this view, which is supported by Zeller, and holds that the foreign element of Essenism is to be sought in the East, to which also Pythagoreanism may have been indebted. 'The fact that in the legendary accounts, Pythagoras is represented as taking lessons from the Chaldeans, Persians, Brahmins and others may be taken as an evidence that their own philosophy at all events was partially derived from Eastern sources' (St.Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, 1875, p.148). He finds broad resemblances between Essenism and the religion of Zoroaster in the matter of dualism, sun-worship, angelolatry, magic, and striving after purity. Hilgenfeld and Renan suggest Buddhist influence. 'The doctrines of the remoter East had found a welcome reception with the Essene' (Milman, The History of Christianity, 1867, vd.ii, p.41)." (19).

Dr.James Moffatt in his article on the Essenes in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics also accepts that the doctrines of the Essenes contain elements which possibly point to Oriental sources and that it is not improbable that "Buddhistic tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenic characteristics".

"Although parallels with many separate details of Essenic belief and praxis can be found in Rabbinic literature, the synthesis of these on Jewish soil is a phenomenon by itself, and - in spite of the efforts made by Jewish and Christian (e.g. Ritschl and Lucius) scholars - it contains elements which point to a Palestinian syncretism enriched from some foreign and possibly Oriental sources...

At the same time, it is not improbable that

some weight should be assigned also to the conjecture (which Hilgenfeld eventually abandoned, but which is being revived at the present day in several quarters) that Buddhistic tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenic characteristics as well as some of those in 2nd. century Gnosticism." (20).

(d) The Gnostics:- Gnosticism, as Dean Inge points out, is not the name of a sect but a tendency. "The word 'Gnosticism', says Inge, "is modern; the adjective 'Gnostic' appears first in the latter half of the second century. 'Gnosis', however, in its technical sense was already familiar a hundred years earlier...Gnosticism sprang up first in Syria, and through its great period, in the second century, it bore signs of an Eastern movement, and was marked by characteristics which belonged to no Greek philosophy...Reitzenstein has shown that there was a pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Levant, from which in fact the Hermetic writings had their origin... The Gnostics were free-thinkers as compared with the great Church, refusing to be fettered by a 'tradition' which was really the average Christian consciousness. They had no wish to make their doctrine acceptable to everybody; they recognized unalterable differences in the moral and intellectual status of believers, who were not at all capable of acquiring 'Gnosis'." (21). In the remarks quoted above, Inge notes the un-Greek character of Gnosticism and the fact of its bearing marks of an Eastern

movement. Prof. E.F.Scott, writing in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, makes a more precise reference to the Indian influences on Gnosticism. He says:

"In later Gnosticism we begin to discern traces of influences proceeding from India. The Basilidean system, as described by Hippolytus, affords striking analogies to Buddhistic thought in its negative conception of God and its doctrine of the Great Ignorance (Nirvana) which will accompany the final consummation. The theory of the Parasitic Soul, as held by Isidorus, son of Basilides, likewise suggests a well-known Buddhistic conception, and Bardesanes, 'the last of the Gnostics', was confessedly influenced by his acquaintance with Indian thought".(22).

King and Kennedy support the point of view put forward by Prof.Scott.. King says:

"That the seeds of the Gnosis were originally of Indian growth carried so far westward by the influence of that Buddhistic movement which had previously overspread all the East, from Tibet to Ceylon, was the great truth faintly discerned by Matter (in his Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme) but which became evident to me upon acquiring even a slight acquaintance with the chief doctrines of Indian theosophy".(23).

Kennedy, in his article on Buddhist Gnosticism in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, takes up the same attitude. Commenting on the view of Basilides, the Gnostic, he says: 'It is Buddhist pure and simple - Buddhist in its governing ideas, its psychology, its metaphysics". (24). Regarding

Bardesanes, who has been described by Prof.Scott in the quotation from Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics given just above, as 'the last of the Gnostics', Radhakrishnan writes: "Bardesanes the Babylonian (born at Edessa on 11 July A.D. 155) is credited with a work on Indian thought. He met in Babylon some of the members of an embassy addressed to the emperor Antonius Pius (A.D.158-81). From two of these, Damadamis and Sandanes, he derived a large amount of information, which Porphyry has preserved in his treatise on Abstinence. Bardesanes distinguishes between the Brahmins and the Buddhists. He seems to have learnt a good deal about the teaching and mode of life of Hindu and Buddhist thinkers; his work was used by Porphyry".(25). There were other prominent Gnostics like Valentinus and Plutarch in whom we find eclecticism in a very remarkable degree. Professor Sir Flinder Petrie sees in the Hermetic books, which were inspired by Gnostic philosophy, "the development of religious thought in Egypt under Persian and Indian influences which formed a basis of later Jewish and Greek developments".(26).

Before I conclude my account of Gnosticism, I should point out that Plotinus found fault with the Gnostics on several points, but, in the main, Gnosti-

cism is closely akin to Neo-Platonism and Dean Inge discusses Gnosticism as one of the precursors of Neo-Platonism (in The Philosophy of Plotinus).

(e) Alexandrian Judaism:- Alexandrian Judaism was a deliberate attempt to Platonise Judaism. Philo was the most central figure of this school and he made a systematic attempt to blend the religious conceptions of the Jewish people with Platonic philosophy. But living at Alexandria at a time when it was a great meeting place of East and West, Philo becomes a representative of the eclectic and syncretistic tendencies that go by the general name of Alexandrian philosophy. Dean Milman, writing on the subject of Egyptian Judaism of Alexandria, observes:

"It might almost seem", writes Dean Milman in his History of Christianity, "that there subsisted some secret and indelible congeniality, some latent consanguinity, whether from kindred common descent or from conquest, between the caste divided population on the shores of the Ganges, and the same artificial state of society in the valley of the Nile, so as to assimilate in so remarkable a manner their religion. It is certain that the genuine Indian mysticism first established a permanent Western settlement in the deserts of Egypt. Its first combination seems to have been with the Egyptian Judaism of Alexandria, and to have arisen from the dreamy Platonism, which in the schools of that city had been engrafted on the Mosaic Institutes".(27).

Philo's influence on Neo-Platonism was considerable. "Philo", says Inge, "in spite of his isolation, as a Jew, from the comity of Greek and

Roman philosophers, is directly in the line of development which ended as Neo-Platonism".(28).

The mystic traditions of Alexandrian Judaism are preserved in the Kabbala about which Radhakrishnan notes: "Many features of the Kabbala, such as the potency assigned to letters, the use of charms and amulets, the theory of emanation as opposed to creation ex nihilo, the doctrine of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, belief in rebirth and a definite pantheistic tendency, are alien to the spirit of orthodox Judaism and akin to that of Upanishads and Tantrism".(29).

(f) Alexandrian Christian Platonism:- The two important figures to be taken note of in this connection are Clement and Origen. The theology of these two Christian writers is very liberal, deeply impregnated with Platonism and Gnosticism. Clement wrote his Stromata about sixty years after the death of Basilides and in his work quotes from his writings. Radhakrishnan has discussed how Clement was indebted to Basilides (and hence presumably to Buddhist thought) for many of his views, particularly those relating to the universality of suffering and rebirth. (30). Max Muller says: "That Clement of Alexandria knew Butta (Buddha) is well-known, he even knew that he had been taken for a god. Nor should it be

forgotten that Pantaenus who, according to Eusebius, had preached the Gospel in India, was one of the teachers of Clement".(31). Regarding Origen, Butterworth remarks that "he ended in speculations which were only remotely connected with it (i.e. Christianity). The real source of these speculations is to be found in the intellectual atmosphere of the time, in which the ideas of Platonists, Stoics and Orientals were mingled".(32). Inge also notes how the doctrines of Origen differ widely from those of the orthodox ecclesiastical Christianity on many important points.(33). Neo-Platonism was an attempt to revive and defend the old pagan faith and as such was not friendly to Christianity, but it should be remembered that both Clement and Origen were fellow-townsmen of Plotinus and that Origen was a fellow-student with him who attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas.(34).

Before I conclude this sub-section, I must briefly mention two thinkers and teachers who immediately preceded Plotinus. These are Numenius of Apamea and Ammonius Saccas. About Numenius, G.R.S.Mead has given the following account on the basis of Vacherot:

"Numenius...was highly esteemed by Plotinus and his school, and this Pythagoreo-Platonic philosopher was saturated with oriental ideas, as Vacherot tells us (1.318):

'Numenius, a Syrian by origin, and living in the Orient, is not less deeply versed in the religious tradition of Syria, Judaea, and Persia, than in the philosophical doctrines of Greece. He is perfectly familiar with the works of Philo, and his admiration goes so far as to ask whether it is Philo who platonizes, or Plato who philonizes; he dubs Plato the Attic Moses. If the doctrines of Philo have at all influenced the philosophy of Greece it is owing to Numenius, the father of this Syrian School out of which Amelius and Porphyry came into Neoplatonism.

The oriental tendency of the philosopher is shown by the following words of Eusebius: 'It must be that he who treats of the Good, and who has affirmed his doctrine with the witness of Plato, should go even further back and take hold of the doctrines of Pythagoras. It must be that he should appeal to the most renowned of the nations, and that he should present the rituals, dogmas, and institutions which - originally established by the Brahmins, Jews, Magian, and Egyptians - are in agreement with the doctrines of Plato (VIII.vii.De Bono). (35).

Of Numenius, Inge says:

"More important in the history of later Platonism is Numenius of Apamea, who so far anticipated Plotinus that Amelius, a favourite pupil of the latter, was commissioned to write a treatise to vindicate the originality of his master's teaching. Numenius wished to go back from Platonism and Pythagoreanism to Plato and Pythagoras; but he also wished to sweep into his net the wisdom of the Magi, Egyptians, Brahmins, and even the Jews". (36).

Ammonius Saccas was the teacher of Plotinus.

Plotinus was so deeply impressed by him when he first attended his lectures that he is reported to have said: "This is the man I was looking for".

The writings of Ammonius are not extant, but impressions about him have survived. He was deeply imbued with the eclectic and syncretistic tendencies of his times. Mead notes: "Ammonius, the master, made such an impression on his times by his great wisdom and knowledge that he was known as 'god-taught'; he was more than a mere eclectic, he himself attained to spiritual insight. The pupil Plotinus also shows all the signs of a student of eastern Raja Yoga, the 'kingly-art' of the science of the soul".(37).

(B) NEO-PLATONISM.

The position of Neo-Platonism vis-a-vis Oriental thought can be understood better if in addition to the account of the fore-runners of Neo-Platonism given above, we have also a picture of the general philosophic and religious syncretism against which this movement arose. Prof. E. F. Scott, writing on the subject of Gnosticism in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, gives an idea of the wide-spread fusion of religious ideas in the period preceding the rise of Gnosticism. What he mentions as the background of Gnosticism holds equally good in the case of Neo-Platonism. He says:

"For the true explanation of the Gnostic movement we must turn to the process of syncretism which accompanied the breaking up of the pagan religions. This amalgamation of different types of national belief

was carried out most fully in the first two centuries of our era; but we can trace its beginnings long before. Even in the period of the ancient Oriental monarchies, the frequent transplanting of peoples had led to a fusion of religions, as in the case of tribes settled in Samaria, who 'feared the Lord, and served their own gods' (2K 17). The fusion took effect on a large scale when Persia fell heir to the Babylonian Empire and imposed its dualistic religion on the various Semitic provinces. After the conquest of Alexander the tendency to syncretism became still more pronounced. The Hellenic culture, now diffused over the East, acted as a solvent upon the native forms of belief. Their myths and observances were interpreted in the light of Greek thought, and were at the same time thrown together in new combinations. The process was completed under the Roman Empire, which finally broke down all national boundaries and promoted a free intercourse of the Eastern races with one another and with the peoples of the West. Moreover, in the Roman period the influence of Stoicism became everywhere prevalent. The Stoic philosophy linked itself readily with the most diverse religious systems, and helped at once to disintegrate and to remould them. All over the East the syncretistic movement was in process, but it advanced most rapidly in the cosmopolitan centres, such as Antioch, Alexandria and the great cities of Asia Minor. In each of these centres there arose a kind of mixed religion, to which the local type of belief - Syrian, Egyptian or Phrygian - naturally contributed the largest share. So far as the masses of the people were concerned, the syncretism was for the most part fortuitous, but there were circles in which it was carried out deliberately. From the time of Plato, the idea had obtained currency that a deeper wisdom was enshrined in the Oriental mythologies; and the beliefs now surging in the East were eagerly embraced by eclectic thinkers. One man would often seek initiation into a number of cults, and would endeavour, with the aid of philosophical categories, to combine their teachings into a single system. We have thus to do with a fusion of religions which,

to a great extent, was artificial - the result of conscious effort on the part of cultured and intellectual men. It was this that distinguished the syncretism of the 1st. century from similar movements of which we have record elsewhere. It is this, too, that partly explains the strange mixture of crude mythology and lofty speculation in the typical Gnostic schools".(38).

Dean Inge presents the same picture and asks us to bear it in mind as the background of the philosophy of Plotinus. The account given by him is indeed very interesting. He says:

"The syncretism of the later Roman empire differed widely from the older polytheism, in that formerly the gods had their several functions and lived together more or less amicably as fellow-citizens of Olympus under the limited sovereignty of Zeus or Jupiter. It differed from the identification of Greek from Roman gods, which was only the recognition of a bilingual religion. But now Sarapis, the Great Mother, and Mithra all claimed to be the supreme deity. We should have expected, from our later experience, to see furious jealousies and bloody persecutions of the weaker religion by the stronger. On the contrary, the temples often stood side by side in the same city, and little or no friction is recorded. The religious condition of a great city in the third century must have presented a strange spectacle. 'Let us suppose', says Cumont (in Oriental Religions), 'that in modern Europe the faithful had deserted the Christian Churches to worship Allah and Brahma, to follow the precepts of Confucius or Buddha, or to adopt the maxims of the Shinto; let us imagine a great confusion of all the races of the world in which Arabian Mullahs, Chinese scholars, Japanese bonzes, Tibetan lamas, and Hindu pundits would be preaching fatalism and pre-destination, ancestor-worship and a devotion to a deified sovereign, pessimism and deliverance through annihilation - a confusion in which all these priests would erect temples of exotic

architecture in our cities and celebrate their diverse rites therein. Such a dream would offer a fairly accurate picture of the religious chaos of the ancient world before the reign of Constantine'. In a modern city thus divided, every pulpit would thunder with denunciations of the soul-destroying errors taught in the next street, and the old state church, if there was one, would be most bitter of all. But at Rome the new gods fused easily with the old...Paganism had no dogma and no church...The Romans had no objection to make-believe of this kind, and distinguished men were quite ready to accept dignified priesthoods without believing anything. We must not form our ideas of paganism from the rhetorical polemic of Christian men of letters. Augustine probably got his list of absurd little Roman gods from Varro, not from his own contemporaries. The real rivals of the Church were the Oriental deities, who are for the most part ignored by the Christian Fathers. The paucity of allusion to Mithra worship in Christian literature is as strange as the silence of the Pagan authors about Christianity. The Church stood outside the zone of mutual tolerance; for the rest, a cult was only disliked if it seemed to be unmanly, immoral or anti-social.

Plutarch is for us the chief mouthpiece of the theory that all religions are fundamentally one, under different names and with different practices. For him and Maximus of Tyre 'the gods' are symbolic representations of the attributes of a Deity who is in his inmost nature unknowable".
(39).

The atmosphere at Alexandria was deeply charged with this fusion of religious ideas and the syncretistic ideology appears to have affected all the different schools of alexandrian thought. Alexandria was particularly susceptible to the mixture of cults being the main meeting-ground of East and West. The Encyclopaedia Britannica describes the

history of the foundation and rise of Alexandria as follows:

"Alexandria:- Inheriting the trade of ruined Tyre and becoming the centre of the new commerce between Europe and the Arabian and Indian East, the city grew in less than a century to be larger than Carthage; and for some centuries it had to acknowledge no superior but Rome. It was a centre not only of Hellenism but Semitism, and the greatest Jewish city in the world. There the Septuagint was produced. The early Ptolemies kept it in order and fostered the development of its museum into the leading Greek university...it acquired fresh importance as a centre of Christian theology and church government. There Arianism was formulated and there Athanasius, the great opponent of both heresy and pagan reaction, worked and triumphed... The well known tale of how the famous library was used for six months to supply the furnaces of the public baths is now regarded as doubtful, in view of the many calamities which the collection had already suffered.

Alexandrian School:- That city (Alexandria), founded by Alexander the Great, was in every way admirably adapted for becoming the new centre of the world's activity and thought. Its situation brought it into commercial relations with all the nations lying around the Mediterranean, and at the same time rendered it the one communicating link with the wealth and civilisation of the East. The great natural advantages it thus enjoyed were increased to an enormous extent by the care of the sovereigns of Egypt, the Ptolemies Soter (323-285), Philadelphus (285-247) and Euergetes (247-222). The first began to draw around him from various parts of Greece a circle of men eminent in literature and philosophy. To these he gave every facility for the prosecution of their learned researches. Under the inspiration of his friend Demetrius of Phalerum, the Athenian orator, statesman and philosopher, this Ptolemy laid the foundations of the great Alexandrian library. He also built, for the convenience of his men of letters, the museum, which was in many respects not unlike a modern university. Philadelphus, whose librarian was

the poet Callimachus, bought up all of Aristotle's library, and included in his collection some foreign works, among these was the Pentateuch, the Greek translation of which (the Septuagint) dates from his time. Euergetes largely increased the library by getting possession of the official Athenian copies of the dramatists, and by compelling all travellers who arrived in Alexandria to leave a copy of any work they possessed... Meanwhile, Alexandria developed a new movement, which was not in the old direction - having indeed nothing in common with it. With its character largely determined by Oriental gnosticism and containing Jewish and later, Christian elements, this second Alexandrian school resulted in the speculative philosophy of the Neoplatonists and the religious philosophy of the Gnostics and the early church fathers". (40).

Dean Inge describes the cosmopolitan character of Alexandria and the fact of its being the meeting-ground of East and West in the following words:

"Alexandria had been ever since its foundation an important centre of learning and cultivation, and it was as cosmopolitan as Rome itself. The East and the West met in its streets, its lecture-rooms, and its temples. It was there that first Judaism and then Christianity became Hellenised; the writings of Philo and of the Christian Platonists remain as memorials of these transformations. If we may believe the emperor Hadrian, even the exclusiveness of Christianity broke down here, and the same person worshipped Christ and Sarapis. It was no doubt inevitable that Oriental ideas should also mingle with European ways of thinking. The wisdom of the East was held in high repute in Alexandria". (41).

The close religious contact between India and Alexandria can be gathered from the fact that there was at Alexandria near about the 2nd. century A.D., a Buddhist monastery. A chronicle of Ceylon,

written in the Pali language, records how at the foundation of a Mahathupa (great tope) by king Duttagamini, the chief Buddhist priest of the monastery at Alexandria was present with a contingent of three thousand Buddhist monks. We read the following account of this event in French in the article entitled "Alexandre Et Alexandrie Dans Les Documents Indiens" in the volume Memorial Sylvain Levi:

"Un autre ouvrage bouddhique en langue palie, le Mahāvamsa, qui est la chronique de Ceylan ordonnée autour d'une chronique monastique, a enregistré aussi le nom d'Alasanda dans un contexte curieux. Lors de l'inauguration du Mahâthûpa, élevé par le roi Duttagâmanî dans le III^e siècle av. J.-C., des moines viennent de tout le monde bouddhique pour assister à la solennité 'Et de la ville des Grecs (Yona), Alasanda, le Grec (Yona) Mahâ Dhammarakkhita qui était un thera (Supérieur) vint en amenant avec lui 3.000 moines (bhikkhu)' (XXIX, 39)'. (42).

It is against this perspective of close East-West association in the realm of ideas that we can get a proper view of the different schools of Alexandrian thought.

As regards Neo-Platonism, Vacherot, Zeller and Brehier are convinced of Indian influence on Neo-Platonism.(43). "Ritter introduces his account of Neoplatonic philosophy with the general title 'Diffusion of Oriental modes of Thought among the Greeks'." (44). Amongst writers in English, an important and authoritative exponent of Platonic Mysticism is Dean Inge and he appears to be inclined

towards accepting Indian influence on Neo-Platonism. The following quotations from his Bampton Lectures on Christian Mysticism, illustrate his view-point:

"I believe that the Neoplatonic 'vision' owes its place in the system to two very different causes. First, there was the direct influence of Oriental philosophy of the Indian type, which tries to reach the universal by wiping out all the boundary-lines of the particular and to gain infinity by reducing self and the world to zero. Of this we shall say more when we come to Dionysius. And, secondly, the blank trance was a real psychical experience, quite different from the 'visions' which we have already mentioned...

The question has been much debated, whether the influence of Persian and Indian thought can be traced in Neoplatonism, or whether that system was purely Greek. It is a quite hopeless task to try to disentangle the various strands of thought which make up the web of Alexandrianism. But there is no doubt that the philosophers of Asia were held in reverence at this period. Origen, in justifying an esoteric mystery-religion for the educated, and a mythical religion for the vulgar, appeals to the example of the 'Persians and Indians'. And Philostratus, in his life of Apollonius of Tyana, says, or makes his hero say, that while all wish to live in the presence of God, 'the Indians alone succeed in doing so'. And certainly there are parts of Plotinus, and still more of his successors, which strongly suggest Asiatic influences. And when we turn from Alexandria to Syria, we find Orientalism more rampant...

There can be little difficulty in classifying this Syrian philosophy of religion. It is the ancient religion of the Brahmins, masquerading in clothes borrowed from Jewish allegorists, half-Christian Gnostics, Manichaens, Platonising Christians, and pagan Neoplatonists. We will now see what St. Dionysius makes of this system, which he accepts from the hand of one who has 'not only learned, but felt the things of God'...

Dionysius is a theologian, not a visionary like his master Hierotheus. His main object is to present Christianity in the guise of a Platonic mysteriosophy, and he uses the technical terms of the mysteries whenever he can. His philosophy is that of his day - the later Neoplatonism, with its strong Oriental affinities...

At the bottom, the doctrine that God can be described only by negatives is neither Christian nor Greek, but belongs to the old religion of India. Let me try to state the argument and its consequences in a clear form. Since God is the Infinite, and the Infinite is the antithesis of the finite, every attribute which can be affirmed of a finite being may be safely denied of God. Hence God can only be described by negatives; He can only be discovered by stripping off all the qualities and attributes which veil Him; He can only be reached by divesting ourselves of all the distinctions of personality, and sinking or rising into our 'uncreated nothingness'; and He can only be imitated by aiming at an abstract spirituality, the the passionless 'apathy' of an universal which is nothing in particular".(45).

G.R.S.Mead, the well-known theosophist and orientalist, in his Preface to Select Works of Plotinus (Bohn's Philosophical Library), works out at length the exact correspondences between Neo-Platonism and the Indian Vedanta and Yoga schools of thought. His views will be given more fully in the form of an Appendix (Appendix A); here it will be sufficient to give some quotations from the work mentioned above to show how he finds close agreement between Neo-Platonism and Indian mysticism. He says:

"By birth he (Plotinus) was an Egyptian of Lycopolis (Sivouth); for eleven years he attended the school of Ammonius at Alexandria; his interest in the systems of

the further East was so great, that he joined the expedition of Gordian in order to learn the religio-philosophy of the Persians and Indians; his pupils Amelius and Porphyry were filled with oriental teaching, and it was in answer to their questioning that Plotinus wrote the most powerful books of the 'Enneads'... We, therefore, find in Plotinus two marked characteristics: the method of stern dialectic on the one hand, and a rational and practical mysticism on the other that reminds us very strongly of the best phase of the Yoga-systems of ancient India... The part of the system of our great Neoplatonist that has been and will be the least understood, is that connected with the practice of theurgy, which consummates itself in ecstasy, the Samadhi of the yoga-art of Indian mystics... Plotinus... shows all the signs of a student of eastern Raja Yoga, the 'kingly art' of the science of the soul... And, indeed, he ended his life in the way that Yogins in the East are said to pass out of the body... The whole system of Plotinus revolves round the idea of a threefold principle, trichotomy or trinity and of pure intuition. In these respects, it bears a remarkable similarity to the great Vedantic system of Indian philosophy... The remarkable agreement between the view of Plotinus as to the three spheres of existence, or states of consciousness, or hypostases of being, in man and the universe, the one being but a reflection of the other, and that of Shankaracharya, the great master of the Advaita Vedantin school of ancient India, may be seen from the following brilliant resume from the point of view of a mystic".

(46).

The interest of Plotinus in Indian thought is apparent from the account given above of his having gone up to Persia in order to reach India - this account is based on the biography of Plotinus written by Porphyry. Commenting on the desire of Plotinus to go to India, Dean Inge says:

"The wisdom of the East exercised a great attraction upon the students of Alexandria, and there was nothing unprecedented in the desire of Plotinus to consult the Magi, and perhaps even the Brahmins, in their own homes".(47).

As against this view, which seeks to emphasise the affinity of Neo-Platonism with Oriental thought, we have the other trend of opinion too which discounts the probability of contacts between the two and attempts to explain Neo-Platonism entirely as a continuation of Hellenic philosophy. An important representative of this view is T. Whittaker, whose work, The Neo-Platonists (A Study in the History of Hellenism) is considered to be a scholarly contribution to the knowledge of the subject. Whittaker does not altogether deny 'Orientalism' in Neo-Platonic philosophy, but his theory is that no fresh contact was made by the Neo-Platonists with Oriental thought; whatever of Orientalism might be found among the Neo-Platonic thinkers came in earlier in the history of Greek philosophy, possibly through Plato himself. Whittaker says:

"Although Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was by race half a Phoenician, it cannot be said that the East contributed anything definable to the content of his ethics. Its sources were evidently Greek. Down to the end of the ancient world, philosophy was continued by men of various races, but always by those who had taken the impress of Greek or of Graeco-Roman civilisation.

The same general account is true of the Neo-

Platonists. They too were men who had inherited or adopted the Hellenic tradition. On the ethical side they continue Stoicism; although in assigning a higher place to the theoretic virtues they return to an earlier view. Their genuine originality is in psychology and metaphysics. Having gone to the centre of Plato's idealistic thought, they demonstrated, by a new application of its principles, the untenableness of the Stoic materialism; and, after the long intervening period, they succeeded in defining more rigorously than Plato had done, in psychology the idea of consciousness, in metaphysics the idea of immaterial and subjective existence. Scientifically, they incorporated elements of every doctrine with the exception of Epicureanism; going back with studious interest to the pre-Socratics, many fragments of whom the latest Neo-Platonist commentators rescued just as they were on the point of being lost. On the subjective side, they carried thought to the highest point reached in antiquity. And neither in Plotinus, the great original thinker of the school, nor in his successors, was this the result of mystical fancies or of Oriental influences. These, when they appeared, were superinduced. No idealistic philosophers have ever applied closer reasoning or subtler analysis to the relations between the inner and the outer world. If the school to some extent 'Orientalised', in this it followed Plato; and it diverged far less from Hellenic ideals than Plato himself."(48).

The eminent Orientalist, Prof. F. Max-Müller, too, while fully maintaining that there was close contact between India and Alexandria during the early centuries of the Christian era, is unable to find any definite proof of ^{Indian} influence on Neo-Platonism. He, however, does not exclude the possibility or even the probability, of some influence. Prof. Max-Müller says:

"No doubt, such channels were there; neither mountains nor seas would have formed impassable barriers. Besides, Buddhism, as early as the third century B.C., was certainly a missionary religion quite as much as Christianity was at a later time. Alexandria was known by name, as Alasando, to the author of the Mahavamsa. On the other hand, the name of King Gondaphores, who is mentioned in the legend of St. Thomas' travels to India, has been authenticated on Indo-Parthian coins as Gondophares, likewise the name of his nephew Abdayases, and possibly, according to M.S. Lévi, that of Vasu Deva as Misdeos. All this is true, and shows that the way between Alexandria and Benares was wide open in the first century A.D. Nor should it have been forgotten that in the Dialogues between Milinda and Nagasena we have a well authenticated case of a Greek king (Menandros) and of a Buddhist philosopher, discussing together some of the highest problems of philosophy and religion. All this is true, and yet we are as far as ever from having discovered a Greek or Indian go-between in flagrante delicto. We have before us ever so many possibilities, nay even probabilities, but we could not expect any bona fide historian to accept any one of them as a proof of a real influence having been exercised by Greece on India or by India on Greece..."(49).

Earlier in the same context, Prof. Max-Muller finds the similarities startling, so startling as to be perplexing to scholars wishing to account for them.

SUB-SECTION IV.

Conclusion.

It would appear from the foregoing discussions that intercourse between East and West existed from the earliest recorded time down to the period of

Neo-Platonism. This intercourse was not only commercial and political, but also cultural and intellectual. So far as Neo-Platonism is concerned, it is clear from my own presentation of Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism in the two previous chapters as well as from the opinions of writers quoted above that striking similarities exist between them. But on the question of influence of the one on the other, the evidence that we have are only suggestive and in no way conclusive. We have no evidence amounting to proof from a critical standpoint and in our present stage of research on the subject, we cannot either assert or altogether deny any influence. There is nothing tangible or definite to prove either position. In such circumstances, it is reasonable to speak only of similarities and coincidences, rather than of positive influence of the one on the other. Religious views of any country or nation deserve to be treated with great deference and circumspection and one should express one's opinion in a sphere like this with due care and reserve. Therefore, all I wish to posit is only this that there is a remarkable agreement between the fundamental doctrines of Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism and that traces of the channels by which ideas might have travelled from one side to the other are still, to some extent, discernible.

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CHAPTER V.The Mysticism of William Wordsworth.SUB-SECTION I.Introductory.

In this Chapter, an attempt will be made to present the mystical philosophy to be found in the poetry of William Wordsworth and to study the possible sources of his mystical and philosophical inspiration. The study of Wordsworth's mysticism will be from the point of view of indicating its similarity in certain fundamental aspects to the ideas of Neo-Platonic philosophy and of Oriental mysticism. The philosophy of Wordsworth will, therefore, be presented, as far as possible, under the same headings as used for the discussion of Oriental mysticism and Neo-Platonism. This will obviously facilitate comparison between Wordsworth's philosophy and the other two schools of thought.

Before the task of analysing and presenting Wordsworth's philosophical thought is undertaken, it is necessary to emphasise that he was a conscious philosophical thinker, that there is a distinct thought-content in his poetry. Beginning with Matthew Arnold, there has been a line of thought

amongst some critics that Wordsworth was no thinker and no philosopher, that he was just a nature-poet in the simplest sense of the term. It is also suggested that Wordsworth was a seer, a genius who had no teachers and no inspirers save nature and solitude. Professor Raleigh's picture is conventional enough and is typical of this attitude.

Professor Raleigh notes:

"It is the interest of Wordsworth's career, studied as an episode in literary history, that it takes us at once to the root of the matter, and shows us the genesis of poetry from its living material, without literary intermediary...The dominant passion of Wordsworth's life owed nothing to books". (1).

Wordsworth's preoccupation with simple themes, his usual simplicity of style, his matter-of-factness and his unpretentiousness all helped to support the popular view indicated above. But while Wordsworth learnt and imbibed much from his reflections and meditations on Nature, it has not been sufficiently appreciated that he was also a man of considerable study. A comparatively detailed examination and discussion of Wordsworth's reading will be made later in this chapter, but it may be mentioned here in passing that he was quite a serious student and had read extensively. We have no complete catalogue of Wordsworth's library, but even from the fragmentary catalogue of his books sold at Rydal Mount in 1859, it is evident that he knew several languages and, in

addition to studying a large number of travel-books and works on geography, was particularly well-read in philosophical, mystical and religious literature and in books on comparative religion and theosophy. Moreover, his own studies were extensively supplemented by what he got from Coleridge, who was perhaps the most versatile and widest-read man of his generation. In such circumstances, it would be uncritical to assume, as Professor Raleigh holds, that he owed nothing to books and study and, like his own Lucy, grew only in the "sun and shower" of Nature.

There is, in fact, a definite intellectual background to Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth was a philosophical thinker and the main ambition of his life was to compose a philosophical poem that should endure. In the Preface to the Edition of 1814 of The Excursion Wordsworth declared that in planning The Recluse, it was his "determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing Views of Man, Nature, and Society". The Preface said:

"Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the

Author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled 'The Recluse'; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement".

It is true that in the same Preface, Wordsworth said that it was not his intention formally to announce a system, but what is usually forgotten is the supplement to this statement where he made it quite clear that the reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. The relevant extract from the Preface is as follows:

"It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself".

Thus, it is clear that Wordsworth intended his poetry to be an exposition of a philosophical system, but being a poet, he wished his system to be conveyed not through formal announcements, but through "clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings". What Wordsworth said in 1814 in the above extracts, was also said by him as early as about 1799 in the First Book of The Prelude:

"... ..Then a wish,
My last and favourite aspiration, mounts
With yearning toward some philosophic song
Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
With meditations passionate from deep
Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse
Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre".(2)

In between 1799 and 1814, Wordsworth, writing to Thomas De Quincey on March 6, 1804, repeated that the chief work of his life was to be a philosophical Poem. He wrote:

"This Poem (The Prelude) will not be published these many years, and never during my lifetime, till I have finished a larger and more important work to which it is tributary. Of this larger work I have written one Book and several scattered fragments: it is a moral and philosophical Poem; the subject whatever I find most interesting in Nature, Man and Society, and most adapted to poetic illustration. To this work I mean to devote the prime of my life, and the chief force of my mind". (3).

In addition to Wordsworth's own repeated declarations, we have also to consider the opinion of Coleridge who had a hand in the planning of both The Prelude and The Excursion and who, to a certain extent, influenced Wordsworth's philosophical views formulated in these poems. Writing to Richard Sharp on January 15, 1804, Coleridge asserted:

"Wordsworth is a poet, a most original poet. He no more resembles Milton than Milton resembles Shakespeare - no more resembles Shakespeare than Shakespeare resembles Milton. He is himself and, I dare affirm that, he will hereafter be admitted as the first and the greatest philosophical poet...and I prophesy immortality to his 'Recluse', as the first and finest philosophical poem..."(4).

From the evidence adduced above, it is clear that Wordsworth was conscious of the philosophic implications of his poetry and we shall not be going out of our way if we look for philosophy in his poems. But while Wordsworth was quite^a conscious philosopher,

it must be stated that he was not interested in philosophy as a purely intellectual acrobatic. He wished to be a teacher of men and his poetry was to bring peace and understanding to humanity. He considered himself to be a dedicated being; a prophet with a mission. No other poet, with the possible exception of Milton, had such a high notion of the mission of poetry as he had. Poetry for him was not just an enjoyment, but a means of attaining to the highest knowledge that man was capable of regarding his own life and the universe in which he lived.

Wordsworth had the gift of vision and the sensibility and powers of a mystic. He belonged to the class which is neither that of pure philosophers nor that of pure mystics, but of mystic-philosophers. That is to say, while there is a substantial core of metaphysics in his thought, while he spoke on purely metaphysical problems like the nature of reality, nature of knowledge, sensation, emotion, imagination etc., he believed not in the process of ratiocination, but in intuition and vision as the means of knowing the truth. Reason he suspected and discarded more or less. From his own experience he could say that reason was a "false secondary power" which merely multiplied distinctions; the inner frame of reality could be known only by direct apprehension and immediate perception of it.

Let us now give a quick glance at some of the key ideas in Wordsworth's poetry.

SUB-SECTION II.

The Mystical Thought in Wordsworth's Poetry.

(a). God:- Wordsworth has often been considered to be a pantheist, but a closer scrutiny would reveal that his views are more inclined towards the Transcendent-Immanent idea of God than towards pantheism. When on the publication of The Excursion, he was charged with pantheism, he emphatically denied the suggestion, but with equal emphasis he asserted that it was wrong to consider the world as the handiwork of God with the Maker standing outside. It seems from a close reading of Wordsworth's letter to Mrs. Clarkson quoted below that, according to him, the creation is the Divine in Immanence, though the creation and God are not one and the same.

"She condemns me for not distinguishing between Nature as the work of God, and God himself. But where does she find this doctrine inculcated? Whence does she gather that the author of The Excursion looks upon Nature and God as the same? He does not indeed consider the Supreme Being as bearing the same relation to the Universe, as a watch-maker bears to a watch. In fact, there is nothing in the course of the religious education adopted in this country, and in the use made by us of the Holy Scriptures, that appears to me so injurious as perpetually talking about making by God".(5).

But while God is not standing outside the creation, He is actually transcendent and cannot be identified with the universe in manifestation. He

is above all boundaries of Space and Time, above all change and "welterings of passion".

"More frequently from the same source I drew
A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense
Of permanent and universal sway,
And paramount belief; there, recognised
A type, for finite nature, of the one
Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
Which - to the boundaries of space and time,
Of melancholy space and doleful time,
Superior, and incapable of change,
Nor touched by welterings of passion^{is},
And hath the name of, God. Transc^{ent} peace
And silence did await upon these thoughts
That were a frequent comfort to my youth".
(6).

This Being is so utterly transcendent that He has no concern with good and evil, "knows not what to fear, or hope for, what to covet or to shun". He is thus past all attributes, past all description; very nearly the impersonal, indefinable 'It'.

"... 'The lordly attributes,
Of will and choice', I bitterly exclaimed,
'What are they but a mockery of a Being
Who hath in no concern of his a test
Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
Or hope for, what to covet or to shun';"(7).

(b). The Universe:- To Wordsworth, the whole universe is alive and spiritual. There is nothing inert and inactive; there is not a single particle anywhere which is insulated from the Spirit. This Spirit is the Soul of all the worlds. Thus all things participate in the Soul and nothing is without life.

"To every Form of being is assigned",
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
'An Active Principle:- how'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists

In all things, in all natures; in the stars
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
 The moving waters, and the invisible air.
 Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
 Beyond itself, communicating good,
 A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
 Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
 No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
 It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds'."(8).

The same idea is conveyed also in the lines
 quoted below. Trees and stones have all their life.
 Their life may not resemble that of a human being,
 but in this vast universe there are modes of living
 unknown to us.

"... ..but after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
 There hung a darkness, call it solitude
 Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
 Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
 But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
 Like living men, moved slowly through the
 mind
 By day, and were a trouble to my dreams".
 (9).

Contact with Nature helped Wordsworth to see
 this vision of the omnipresence of Life. All
 objects live and sing eternally a symphony of praise
 and thanksgiving to the Most High. This symphony
 is always audible to the mystic, but is most audible
 when the bodily senses are asleep and he is in a
 state of trance.

"... ..I, at this time,
 Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
 Thus while the days flew by, and years
 passed on,
 From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had received so much, that all my thoughts

Her prospects, nor did he believe, - he
saw".(13).

When the least of things is infinite, spiritual and divine, to the vision of the mystic the earth cannot remain a solid, material, impenetrable object. Every common sight of earth becomes "apparelled in celestial light", throws forth "gleams like the flashing of a shield" and speaks "rememberable things". "The common countenance of earth and sky" remains "nowhere unembellished by some trace of that first Paradise whence man was driven". The earth becomes transfigured; matter becomes luminous.

"... ..even then I felt
 Gleams like the flashing of a shield; -
 the earth
 And common face of Nature spake to me
 Rememberable things... .."(14).

"I looked for universal things; perused
 the common countenance of earth and sky:
 Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
 Of that first Paradise whence man was
 driven;
 And sky whose beauty and bounty are
 expressed
 By the proud name she bears - the name of
 Heaven.
 To every natural form, rock, fruit, or
 flower,
 Even the loose stones that cover the
 highway,
 I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
 Or linked them to some feeling: the great
 mass
 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
 That I beheld respired with inward meaning".
 (15).

This 'inward meaning' of things becomes deeper
 and deeper. For

"This is the freedom of the Universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know..." (16).

When we understand the 'inward meaning' of things deeply enough, we realise that there is no ultimate evil in the constitution of the universe.

"... ..To fear and love,
To love as prime and chief, for there fear
ends,
Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
In presence of sublime or beautiful forms,
With the adverse principles of pain and joy -
Evil as one is rashly named by men
Who know not what they speak". (17).

At another place also Wordsworth speaks of "evil, overweeningly so called". (18). All the struggle and suffering are only outward, not fundamental. At the heart of all the seething turmoil of things is a still centre.

"Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation". (19).

Wordsworth's attitude towards the universe is optimistic for not only there is no evil, but actually blessings are spread all around us. A wise and benevolent Spirit is ordering the processes of the Universe and all is for our good.

"...in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
Of blessings, and most studious of our good".
(20).

We can fly back, as it were, to our real Home with the aid of the powers of the mind awakened and vivified into a condition of its higher activity. This condition of the mind Wordsworth called Imagination. It is by this faculty of Imagination that we make contact with the spiritual realms of reality and are thereby convinced that we are heir to endless life. This discovery each man has to make for himself; it is a matter of personal intuition and experience. Second-hand knowledge from others on this question is of no consequence to man; unaided and with his single effort, he must explore the spiritual world for himself and discover the truth of life eternal with bliss ineffable which is the goal of human life. Man, the creature made of dust, has to find his own apotheosis, his own immortal, glorious destiny.

"This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind
And Reason in her most exalted mood.
This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labour:... ..
... ..from its progress we have drawn
Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
O human Being, Eternity, and God.

...Here must thou be, O Man!
Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
No other can divide with thee this work:
No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability: 'tis thine,
The prime and vital principle is thine
In the recesses of thy nature, far
From any reach of outward fellowship,
Else is not thine at all". (24).

(d). The Law of Evolution:- However bewildering and chaotic events taking place in the world might seem, there is actually a benign purpose working itself out through them. The world has not been left to chance and crass casual^{ty}, but a Being of infinite benevolence and power is taking care of the procession of events.

"... 'One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists - one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good'."
(25).

If mankind suffers, the suffering is the consequence of its own actions. There is a law operating in human life which dispenses justice unerringly and unceasingly.

"... though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just".
(26).

However lowly and imperfect the ordinary man might seem to be, there is open for every one the possibility of upward evolution. Nature puts no insurmountable obstruction to the improvement of mankind.

"Why is this glorious creature to be found
One only in ten thousand? What one is,
Why may not millions be? What bars are
thrown
By nature in the way of such a hope?
Our animal appetites and daily wants,
Are these obstructions insurmountable?
If not, then others vanish into air". (27).

There is a faculty in every man with the help of which he can sublimate all his weaknesses into things of virtue, illuminate all the dark spots of his life. Climbing upward step by step, rising over all his mistakes and disappointments, he may reach the goal of ethical and spiritual progress.

"Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt,
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all
sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment - nay, from
guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair". (28).

Human life thus is meant to evolve, to pass through shades to endless joy. The struggles of life sanctify it and lead it to its goal of perfection.

"Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine, or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, in tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless
joy". (29).

(e). The Cosmic Consciousness and the Beatific

Vision:- Wordsworth believed that man has to find

happiness in this very world and not in some far-off Utopia or distant Paradise. This common earth of ours itself has to be transfigured into an Elysium. The common clod of earth becomes luminous and spiritual if we have the vision to transform it into something ethereal and celestial.

"Not in Utopia, - subterranean fields, -
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us, - the place where, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all!"(30).

"- Beauty - a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials - waits upon my
steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields - like those of
old
Sought in the Atlantic Main - why should
they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
- I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal
verse
Of this great consummation". (31).

Wordsworth hallowed the period of childhood just because at this time "the earth, and every common sight" seem "apparelled in celestial light" and the solid, material earth seems to vanish and become something shadowy and immaterial.

"Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings

Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised". (32).

The child's capacity for such a vision was not merely a matter of belief for Wordsworth; he could attest it from his personal experience. In the notes dictated to Isabella Fenwick late in his life, Wordsworth stated:

"I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines 'Obstinate questionings etc.'. To that dreamlike vividness of splendour which invests objects of sight in childhood every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony". (33).

This visionary quality is lost as one moves forward in life and becomes more and more engrossed in worldly activities, but it can still be recovered fitfully. This is because the human mind retains its capacity of being attuned to the spiritual world. The mind can be made to rise above sense-perceptions and establish its contact with the realms of super-physical reality. This is, of course, not the ordinary condition, but an exalted state of the mind. This exalted mental condition, however, is attainable.

All strength - all terror, single or in
bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form -
Jehovah - with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones -
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams - can breed such fear
and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man -
My haunt, and the main region of my song".
(36).

To the powers of the awakened mind, the external material world offers no resistance; in fact, there is an inner, pre-existent harmony between the human mind and the external world. When the Imagination is at work, the external world co-operates with it and they with their "blended might accomplish" a new creation.

"... ..my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted: - and how exquisitely, too -
Theme this but little heard of among men -
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended
might
Accomplish".(37).

This is the step leading to the mystic vision. Wordsworth has described the moment of mystic vision when "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world is lightened". At this moment, our senses are left behind sleeping; man is awake in his soul. The moment is one of ecstasy; we do not argue and reason, but "see into the life

of things".

"... that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: - that serene and blessed
mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,-
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things". (38).

Wordsworth has given descriptions of this state of trance at several places. He generally experienced this ecstatic trance in the solitude of Nature, because this mood was easily induced in him by the holy calm prevailing there. Here is another picture in which he has described this ecstasy felt by the Wanderer (in The Excursion) who, to a large extent, represents himself:

"... his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his
life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no
request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!"
(39).

The important phrases in this extract are "in

such high hour of visitation from the living God" and "thought was not". This moment of ecstasy transcends the thinking activities of the mind; reason is left behind. And it is a moment when man feels within himself the presence of the living God; at this high hour man's consciousness is lifted up to the divine, cosmic plane.

SUB-SECTION III.

The Affinity Between Wordsworth's Mysticism And Neo-Platonism.

It is evident from the foregoing presentation of Wordsworth's mysticism that on many fundamental points it is in remarkable agreement with the doctrines of Neo-Platonism. The more salient points of similarity between the two on each of the topics discussed in the previous sub-section^{one} indicated below.

(a). God:- As in Neo-Platonism, so in Wordsworth, God is conceived of both as Transcendent and Immanent. The Transcendent Godhead is past all attributes, beyond the possibility of any description. He is above the boundaries of Space and Time, changeless and absolute. The creation is not the handiwork of God, but God Himself in Immanence. Wordsworth was an Immanentist and, strictly speaking, not a

pantheist, because while the Universe is divine, it is not equal to God. While God pervades the creation, the creation is in no way conterminous with the Divine Reality.

(b). The Universe:- Like the Neo-Platonists, Wordsworth saw the vision of the One behind the appearance of the Many. The universe is a single living entity; every particle is alive and sentient; there is but one life and one mind working in the whole of the universe. Rocks and stones and trees, things which appear to be the very antithesis of life, are neither lifeless nor inert, but instinct with life and mind. All things participate jointly in the Soul of the universe which is integral and indivisible. Matter is not really a solid, material substance; it becomes luminous and spiritual to the discerning eye of the mystic. There is no evil in the universe. Our idea of evil is due to a defect in our own vision and understanding and not to any shortcoming in the constitution of the universe. When we see and understand things correctly, evil does not exist. All the struggle and agitation is only an outward show; there is at the centre of reality peace and bliss. A wise and benign spirit is taking care of the universe, nothing goes wrong or can go wrong with it. "God is in His Heaven and all's right with the world".

(c). Man:- The human soul is divine and its true home is not on earth but in heaven. The descent of the soul into human body means a moulting of its wing-feathers; while in the body it is in a prison-house of sense. But even while imprisoned in the body, it can re-establish its contact with its heavenly home. In the embodied state, this contact is only fitful and momentary and not lasting.

(d). The Law of Evolution:- Wordsworth never talked of re-birth, but he believed in the pre-existence of souls. His idea that mankind suffers as a result of its own actions came quite close to the doctrine of Karma. He believed that there is for every one open the path of evolution and that learning from his mistakes, man rises in the scale of virtue. Thus growing and evolving, human life is to pass through shades to endless joy.

(e). The Cosmic Consciousness and the Beatific Vision:- The mind of man is a thing of awful majesty; it is the hiding place of his super-physical powers. Thinking and discursive reasoning are but the lower activities of the mind; in its fully awakened state, it becomes attuned to the innermost realities of existence and can commune with the cosmic spiritual essence. In this state of mystic trance, there is an at-one-ment between man and God. This is the high hour of the visitation of the living God within the human mind. It is the state of ecstasy. In

this state, the individual becomes identified with the cosmos and the universe conceals no secrets from him. He stands face to face before the inmost Truth and sees that the Universe is a Unity of Life and Mind. The sense of the Many disappears; only the consciousness of the One remains.

Except on the question of re-brith, about which Wordsworth is silent, the agreement of Wordsworthian mysticism with Neo-Platonism is complete.

SUB-SECTION IV.

Probable Sources of Wordsworth's Mysticism.

The question that now remains to be discussed is whether Wordsworth arrived at all his ideas and views by himself or whether there were certain influences working on him and stimulating his way of thinking. The answer to such a question cannot be very categorical or emphatic. The task of tracing influences on a writer's mind is always a difficult and delicate matter; in the case of a writer like Wordsworth, the effort to do so is one of particular difficulty because he was a highly egotistical writer - as Keats put it, "the Egotistical Sublime". Wordsworth believed in and practised an intense kind of personal realism. Nothing that he did not see or

feel or perceive to be true in and by the light of his own imagination was allowed by him to be the subject-matter of his poetry. There is not a single emotion, nor any image in his poetry which he had not personally felt or visualized. He did not allow anything that had not passed through the mint and fount of his own personality to enter his poetry. There can be no doubt about the originality of his genius. No poet of the stature of Wordsworth can achieve and retain his undisputed eminent position by retailing second-hand thoughts and experiences. But no poet, however great or original he might be, can altogether escape the influence of previous and contemporary thinkers and writers. To endeavour, therefore, to study the probable sources of Wordsworth's ideas is not to undermine his eminence as an original poet; it is only an attempt to understand him better and more fully, to shed more light on his ideas.

The discussion in this sub-section will be presented under the following headings: (a) Wordsworth's Reading; (b) Wordsworth and Hartley's Associationism; (c) Wordsworth and German Transcendentalism; (d) Wordsworth and Platonism and (e) Wordsworth and Neo-Platonism. A glance at Wordsworth's reading will reveal the poet's reading-interests and the intellectual background to his

poetry; the other sections are intended to take into account the more important lines along which his philosophy has been sought to be interpreted by his critics.

(a) Wordsworth's Reading:- Wordsworth did not maintain a reading list and we can have no exact idea of the extent of the poet's reading. But some light is thrown upon the subject by the list of books sold out of his library after his death. It should be remembered that this list is not a complete catalogue of all the books in his library; it is only a list of books put on auction and the Editor of The Transactions of Wordsworth Society, Vol.VI, in which this list appears, notes that many of the important books particularly liked by the poet were retained by the members of his family. We can, however, form our impressions about the poet's reading on the basis of the list that is available. A short selection of books out of this list will be found in Appendix B. From a scrutiny of the Rydal Mount sale-list, the following inferences appear to be deducible: (1). Wordsworth was a studious person seriously interested in books and the opinion which characterises him as an "unbookish" man, trained only in the school of Nature, is unsound.

(2). He was particularly interested in books on Universal history and Universal religion. He

wanted to familiarise himself with the history and culture of other nations and to come in contact with their religious thought.

(3). He was in contact with the ideas on natural religion and the theosophic line of thought. The books of Jacob Boehme were present in his library and Boehme is a notable mystic of the theosophical school.

(4). He knew Plato as interpreted by Thomas Taylor. He had the books of Thomas Taylor in their first edition which might indicate that he had read Taylor before he wrote his main philosophical poems. And Taylor, it may be remembered, is considered by competent authorities to have interpreted Plato in the light of the subsequent development of his (Plato's) philosophy in the Neo-Platonic school.

(5). He was familiar with the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. The most important exposition of the thought of this school is to be found in Ralph Cudworth's The True Intellectual System of the Universe, which was present in his library. Of course, he might also have known about the Cambridge Platonists while he was at the university.

(6). He wished to learn something of the Oriental languages like Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic, etc. There were several lexicons and grammar books on these languages in his library and

there was a selection from the great Persian mystic poet, Sadi, present in translation in five volumes.

Wordsworth has told us in The Prelude that he did not slight books, that would have been "to lack all sense".(40). He has described how on many occasions he read from morning till evening with deep and rapt attention.(41). For him books were "Powers for ever to be hallowed".(42). While concluding The Prelude, he regretted not having sufficiently discussed the role of books in the growth of his mind.(43). Naturally enough, Wordsworth's extensive study coloured his mind and influenced his writings. Professor Lane Cooper, in two articles entitled A Glance at Wordsworth's Reading contributed to Modern Language Notes (Vol. XXII - 1907), has discussed the question of the influence of Wordsworth's reading on his poetry. Professor Cooper has examined Wordsworth's poetry from the point of the influence of travel-books on the poet's language and description, but he himself suggests that he is only initiating a line of investigation because he believes that a similar examination in other fields of the poet's work will be equally repaying and illuminating. After pointing out the wide range of Wordsworth's study and the strength of his "verbal memory", Professor Cooper remarks; "In any case, our poet's reading after 1795 and, more particularly, about 1797 - 1798 was various and

extensive, - so extensive as to call for industry on the part of any one who tries to duplicate it, - and was chosen largely as an aid, direct and indirect, to literary composition". And after examining the effect, direct and indirect, of travel-books on some of the most striking and supposedly original passages in Wordsworth's poetry, Professor Cooper points out: "The present article can but touch upon a single aspect of that various debt, using this aspect as a type, and must in any case be considered a preliminary rather than a finished study". Professor Emile Legouis too, in The Early Life of William Wordsworth, has discussed to what extent Wordsworth was influenced by the writers whom he had studied and remarks: "the occasions on which Wordsworth has borrowed are so numerous that a special edition would be required to exhaust the list".(44).

We have Wordsworth's own testimony also about the use he made of his study in his literary compositions. On March 6th 1798, he wrote to his friend James Tobin: "If you could collect for me any books of travel you would render me an essential service, as without much of such reading my present labours cannot be brought to a conclusion".(45).

The present labours referred to relate to his main life-work, The Recluse. Only five days after the letter to Tobin mentioned above, he wrote to another

friend, James Losh: "I have been tolerably industrious within the last few weeks. I have written 1300 lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility. Its title will be The Recluse; or, Views of Nature, Man and Society".(46). Seven years after this letter was written, Dorothy Wordsworth, in a letter to Lady Beaumont written on Christmas Day 1805, said: "I have transcribed two thirds of the Poem addressed to Coleridge, and I am more than pleased with it as I go along. I often think of the time when William shall have the pleasure of reading it to you and Sir George. He is very anxious to get forward with the Recluse and is reading for the nourishment of his mind, preparatory to beginning". (47).

On the basis of the foregoing evidence, it should be acceptable that Wordsworth derived nourishment of mind from his extensive studies and he made use of the same, directly as well as indirectly, in his literary compositions.

(b). Wordsworth and Hartley's Associationism:- A common approach to the problem of the interpretation of Wordsworth's philosophical poetry has been to link it up with the Sensationistic philosophy and Associationistic psychology of David Hartley. A most notable champion of this school of the interpretation of Wordsworthian philosophy is Professor Arthur Beatty who developed his theory in several articles,

but rather exhaustively in his book William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations.

This line of interpretation has appealed to several critics of Wordsworth and, to some extent, holds the field even to-day. A complete refutation of this theory, however, was undertaken by Professor Melvin Rader in his article, The Transcendentalism of William Wordsworth, contributed to Modern Philology.⁴⁸

Professor Rader maintains that though in the beginning of his poetic career Wordsworth was familiar with the ideas of Associationistic philosophy and to some extent subscribed to them, he had extricated himself from them before 1798 and all the poetry of his great decade (1797-1807) breathes the air of transcendentalism rather than of the materialistic and mechanichal school of Associationistic philosophy. He accepts that Wordsworth, till sometime later, continued to use the terminology of Associationistic psychology, but that was for the sake of convenience; his ideas had moved far away from Hartleian psychology. Rader says: "I would agree with Mr. Beatty that The Prelude is deeply affected by the associational psychology. But in the light of the passage that I have just now quoted, it is certain that Wordsworth's deepest allegiance was to a mystical philosophy. I have no doubt that he found the language of associationism very useful in describing 'the growth of a

poet's mind', for mysticism has no language of its own; it has always insisted upon the ineffability of truth".(49). As Beatty has relied considerably on Coleridge's interest in Hartleianism, Radar has quoted extensively from Coleridge's letters and entries in his Note-Book to show that Hartleianism was repudiated very early by him. In fact, by the time he became acquainted with Wordsworth and began to exert his great influence on him, Coleridge was already an Anti-Hartleian. Radar sums up his article as follows: "This rapid survey of the evidence reveals (1) that direct proof of Wordsworth's adherence to Hartley has not been advanced: (2) that Coleridge's enormous influence upon Wordsworth was early directed against associationism; (3) that Coleridge, a supreme authority, regarded The Prelude and the Ode on Intimations of Immortality as non-Hartleian, and expected that Wordsworth's anti-associationism would find a clear enunciation in The Excursion: and (4) that Wordsworth unambiguously expressed transcendental doctrines, quite opposed to Hartleianism. We are forced to conclude that Mr. Beatty has greatly over-estimated the influence of associationism upon the Lake poet".(50).

Professor E. De Selincourt is another Wordsworthian scholar who seems to have sympathy for the Hartleian interpretation of Wordsworth. But he also has to admit that Wordsworth's sensationalism is of a very different kind from Hartley's. Commen-

:ting on the idea and philosophy of life and religion to be found in The Prelude, he says:

"The philosophical parentage of this conception is unmistakable; it is the direct offspring of the sensationalism of the eighteenth century, and in particular of David Hartley...but it is Hartley transcendentalized by Coleridge, and at once modified and exalted by Wordsworth's own mystical experience. For to him there was always the great paradox, that though it is simply by the proper exercise of eye and ear that man reaches his full moral and intellectual stature...yet revelation flashes upon him when 'the light of sense goes out'; and 'laid asleep in body', he becomes deeply conscious of the presence of God within him. In the highest mood of ecstasy this consciousness of complete oneness with God is so overwhelming, that his other attributes as man seem to fall from him". (51).

In the above extract, though Professor E. De Selincourt seems to be of the view of Professor Beatty, he is actually very much in agreement with Professor Rader. The philosophical parentage appears to be unmistakably Hartleian, because, as Professor Rader admits, Wordsworth quite frequently made use of the language of associationistic psychology. But actually Wordsworth had left associationism far behind. The mind is most vivid, not when the senses are most active, but when we are 'laid asleep in body'. The highest mood of ecstasy - the moment of illumination and revelation - comes when the light of senses goes out. Wordsworth's philosophy was, in the main, transcendental and mystical, and there is no paradox as Professor De

Selincourt thinks.

There are certain pronouncements of Coleridge which are directly relevant to the issue under discussion. There is a passage in his Table-Talk (July 21, 1832) which runs as follows:

"I cannot help regretting that Wordsworth did not first publish his thirteen books on the growth of the individual mind - superior, as I used to think, upon the whole, to The Excursion... Then the plan laid out, and, I believe, partly suggested by me, was that Wordsworth should assume the station of a man in mental repose, as one whose principles were made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy. He was to treat man as man, - a subject of eye, ear, touch, and taste, in contact with external nature, and informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses".

In the above Coleridgean pronouncement, the phrases "informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses", indicate a direct and intentional refutation of Hartley's Associationism. It would appear, in fact, that one of the chief objects of Wordsworth's philosophical poetry was a deliberate opposition to Associationism and this was a part of the original plan of The Prelude and The Excursion (with echoes of it in the subsidiary pieces). A clearer statement of the same idea was given by Coleridge in his letter to Wordsworth himself when he communicated to him his reasons for not being quite satisfied with The Excursion, soon after its publication. On May 30, 1815, Coleridge wrote to Wordsworth:

"I supposed you first to have meditated the faculties of man in the abstract, in their correspondence with his sphere of action, and, first in the feeling, touch and taste, then in the eye, and last in the ear, - to have laid a solid and immovable foundation for the edifice by removing the sandy sophisms of Locke, and the mechanic dogmatists, and demonstrating that the senses were living growths and developments of the mind and spirit, in a much juster as well as higher sense, than the mind can be said to be formed by the senses". (52).

It is hardly necessary here to quote passages from Wordsworth's poetry to illustrate the transcendental basis of his metaphysics. This has been done while discussing the poet's mysticism in subsection II of this chapter. There is no doubt that though Wordsworth dwelt upon the power of the senses in his early poems, his philosophical convictions were largely of a transcendental kind and in formulating his theory of Imagination, he diverged far from Hartley's Associationism.

(c). Wordsworth and German Transcendentalism:-

The question of Wordsworth's transcendentalism calls for the consideration of a possible source of influence - the contemporary German metaphysical thought. There is an impression that the English Romantic Movement was influenced by German Romanticism and Idealism. There is no doubt that at the time Romanticism was gaining ground and coming into vogue in Britain, there was considerable enthusiasm

here for German literature. There were enthusiasts like Henry Mackenzie, William Taylor of Norwich and Henry Crabb Robinson who were great propagandists of German literature in Britain. Coleridge himself, in his talks and writings, gave the impression of having been fascinated by German writers. But when one closely scrutinises the actual German influence on English literature of the early Romantic period, one finds that it has been very much exaggerated. Perhaps it would not be far from right to say that in the main the influence consisted in imbibing the atmosphere of horror and terror that pervaded the German romances of the time. We are interested here mainly in assessing the influence of philosophical ideas, and in this sphere, at least in so far as the main Romantic poets are concerned, it is becoming recognised more and more as a result of close scrutiny and research that the contact was slight and the actual influence almost negligible.

In the case of Wordsworth, and of Coleridge too, it can be asserted with a certain amount of confidence, that the influence of German philosophy was very little, if anything at all. Though both Wordsworth and Coleridge planned a visit to Germany and actually stayed there for some time during a formative period of their lives, the avowed purpose of their

stay there was to pick up some knowledge of Natural Science, besides, of course, learning the language. Wordsworth's stay coincided with a very bad winter there; he remained most of the time in an out-of-the-way place, Goslar, and far from learning much about science or philosophy, he did not even make much headway with the language. Coleridge, writing to his wife from Ratzeburg, January 14, 1799, says:

"I hear from Wordsworth as letters can go backward and forward in a country where fifty miles in a day and night is expeditious travelling! He seems to have employed more time in writing English than in studying German. No wonder! for he might as well have been in England as at Goslar, in the situation which he chose and with his unseeking manners. He has now left it, and is on his journey to Nordhausen. His taking his sister with him was a wrong step; it is next but impossible for any but married women, or in the suit of a married woman, to be introduced to any company in Germany. Sister here is considered as only a name for mistress. Still, however, male acquaintance he might have had, and had I been at Goslar I would have had them; but Wordsworth, God love him! seems to have lost his spirits and almost his inclination for it".(53).

Coleridge was right in pointing out that Wordsworth apparently gave more time to writing English than to studying German, because it was in Germany that Wordsworth wrote his celebrated Lucy poems and the opening lines of The Prelude. Coleridge himself, though he stayed longer in Germany, hardly achieved anything substantial. Perhaps he picked up the German language better than Wordsworth did, saw more

society, but the learning of Natural Science was confined to attending a few lectures on Physiology by Blumenbach, and as for his philosophical efforts, instead of reading philosophical books in Germany, he only succeeded in returning home with £30-0-0 worth of books on German philosophy.

The German borrowing or influence, in the case of Wordsworth as well as of Coleridge, in the purely literary field too, was very slight so that it is not possible to suggest that though direct philosophical influence can be discounted, ideas did percolate through literary works. F.W.Stokoe, who studied this problem, notes as follows about Wordsworth in his German Influence in the English Romantic Period:

"The relation of Wordsworth to German literature appears to have been of the most superficial description. As we have seen the opportunity of learning German was neglected. There is no evidence of much German reading on Wordsworth's part, either then or subsequently, and his opinions of German authors, when expressed, show neither liking for them nor understanding of them. Goethe he disliked...
...The above-mentioned instances are all, or nearly all, than can, in my opinion be safely attributed to German influence. They amount to very little - some outlines and a faint reflection of the spirit of Die Ruher, a disquisition or two on the mythopoeic faculty after Schiller, a metrical scheme from Bürger, a tale from Friederike Brun: the literature of Germany, in supplying the theme or the manner in these few cases, has not necessarily penetrated beyond the poet's superficial consciousness; and there is nothing to show that it ever did so".(54).

A detailed consideration of the relationship of Coleridge's ideas with German literature and philosophy will be found in the next chapter where his poetry and mysticism will be discussed. Suffice it to say here that Wordsworth's metaphysics did not owe much to contemporary German transcendentalism either through direct contact or through Coleridge or through any other source.

(d). Wordsworth and Platonism:- A third line of interpretation of Wordsworthian philosophy is with reference to Platonism. There is some difference of opinion among scholars as to whether Wordsworth had studied Plato himself. J.H. Shorthouse in his essay on "The Platonism of Wordsworth"(55) holds that Wordsworth did not know Plato directly; Platonic ideas came to him mainly through Coleridge. As against this view, three Wordsworthian scholars, namely, (a) E.A. White in "Wordsworth's Knowledge of Plato"(56), (b) Lane Cooper in "Wordsworth's Knowledge of Plato"(57), and (c) H.E. Cookson in "Wordsworth and Plato"(58) have maintained that Wordsworth knew Plato directly. Apart from the general improbability of Wordsworth not knowing Plato at all, though he was interested in philosophy and Platonism was so much in the air in his time, the presence of Thomas Taylor's translation of The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus (1793), of Schleiermacher's Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato (translated from the German

by W.Dobson, M.A.) and of Platonis Dialogi V., ex recens, Foster (Oxon. 1752) in his library - vide Rydal Mount Sale Catalogue Lot Nos.408,409 - almost settles the question in favour of his knowing some works of Plato first hand. Besides reading portions of Plato, Wordsworth was temperamentally also something of a Platonist and there was in him what is known as personal Platonism. Also he could not but have imbibed some of Plato's ideas indirectly from the long and very extensive Platonic tradition. In fact, Wordsworth furnishes an example of what in the language of Professor Notopoulos (in The Platonism of Shelley), we may call personal, direct and indirect Platonism all combined. There is no doubt that a student of Platonism can glean from Wordsworth's philosophy a good number of Platonic ideas. But while there is similarity between the thoughts of Plato and Wordsworth and it would be uncritical to assert that Wordsworth had nothing to take from Plato, the affinity between Wordsworth and the Neo-Platonic school is much greater and more fundamental than between Wordsworth's philosophy and direct Platonism. Plato is an intellectual thinker; he is rational throughout and does not accept any human faculty as higher than reason. Wordsworth's deepest convictions are based on intuition and mystical vision. Plato looks upon the material world as a shadow of the eternal world above. Even

in moments of the greatest illumination, he never forgets the distinction between the two. He is never a monist. The position in Plato, to repeat the point made above, is that the world of Ideas is the eternal world; the material world is a shadow and adumbration of the world of Ideas above. But Wordsworth is a mystic and when the ecstasy of heightened Imagination gives him the mystic vision, the material world vanishes altogether and everything becomes transfigured and spiritualized. In this apocalyptic moment of mystic vision, there are no ideas and their shadows; the entire universe is one living, throbbing, undivided and indivisible whole. In the philosophy of Plato, the world of Many is an extended, imperfect manifestation of the One, but the distinction remains. In Wordsworth's mystic philosophy, the world of Many vanishes altogether and only the One remains. Thus Wordsworth's philosophy is more inclined to the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus than to direct Platonism. In Plotinus everything emanates from the One; is therefore nothing but the One. Plotinus's philosophy is a system of monism; Plato is not such an absolute monist as Plotinus.

(e). Wordsworth and Neo-Platonism:- What is the evidence of Wordsworth's contact with Neo-Platonic thought? First of all, we must look to Thomas Taylor who was translating the Neo-Platonic philo-

:sophers as well as Plato himself about the time Wordsworth was planning and writing his philosophical poems. A list of books translated from the Classics into English by Thomas Taylor between 1787 and 1804 will be found in Appendix C. We do not have any Neo-Platonic book translated by Taylor in the Rydal Mount sale list, but we have to remember that this list is not a complete catalogue of all the books of Wordsworth. Five Books of Plotinus were translated and published by Thomas Taylor in 1794 and there is a close similarity between the matter of these Plotinian books and the theme of some of the poems of Wordsworth written about this date. A few other books of Plotinus and Proclus in Thomas Taylor's translation also appeared at the time the philosophical ideas were germinating in Wordsworth's mind. The similarities between Wordsworth's ideas and Taylor are at many points striking and Frederick Pierce, writing in Philosophical Quarterly (Vol. xii, 1928, pp. 60-64), detects many parallels between Wordsworth and Taylor. Even if we assume that Wordsworth had not read any of the translations from Plotinus or Proclus by Taylor, the fact remains that Taylor interpreted Plato himself Neo-Platonically and in his introductions, notes and commentaries presented Plato according to the later Platonic tradition (Neo-Platonism). And we have several of Plato's works in Thomas Taylor's translation in

Wordsworth's library. Schleirmacher's Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato (which is also present in Wordsworth's library) would also colour Plato with the Neo-Platonic tinge as Schleirmacher had known Neo-Platonic leanings. Besides Thomas Taylor and Schleirmacher, we have also the channel of the Cambridge Platonists. Wordsworth could not have helped knowing about the famous group of the seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonists while he was at the university. At any rate, Ralph Cudworth's The True Intellectual System of the Universe is to be found in Wordsworth's library and this book is the most authoritative exposition of this school of Platonic thought. Professor J.A. Passmore, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Otago, in his book Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation makes the following observation about the Platonism of Cudworth: "It is not surprising, in the light of these facts, that Coleridge thought that Cudworth should be described as a Plotinist, rather than as a Platonist; certainly one cannot but be struck by the extent to which Cudworth makes use of the teachings of Neo-Platonists". (59). Cudworth, who is called by Professor J.H. Muirhead as the 'real founder of British Idealism' (The Platonic Tradition, p.35), would certainly have weaned Wordsworth away from Mechanic philosophy and taken him towards Idealism. He protested vigorously

against the world being regarded as a giant clock-work and asserted that there was life and creativity in it. He would also have given Wordsworth a different theory of Mind from that given by the school of Locke. In his Principles of Eternal and Immutable Morality, Cudworth had asserted:

"The essence of nothing is reached into by the sense looking outward, but by the mind's looking inward into itself. That which looks abroad upon its object is not one with that which it perceives, but is at a distance from it, and therefore cannot know and comprehend it...in abstract things themselves, which are the primary objects of science, the intellect and the thing known are really one and the same. For these ideas or objects of intellection are nothing else but modifications of the mind itself. But sense wholly gazes and gads abroad, and therefore doth not know and comprehend its object, because differing from it".(60).

The epistemology of Cudworth is Plotinian in its meaning and implication. The mystical experiences of Wordsworth would have attracted him very much to Cudworth's views and he would have found in them great validity.

The most important source of Wordsworth's Neo-Platonism was Coleridge. Coleridge was an omnivorous reader, a 'library cormorant' as he called himself and the fascination of Neo-Platonic ideas for him began early and lasted his whole life long. Charles Lamb, in Christ's Hospital five and thirty years ago, Essays of Elia, describes Coleridge, while yet a school-boy of about seventeen, unfolding" in...

deep and sweet intonations the mysteries of Jamblichus or Plotinus". Near about 1796 when the impact of his personality on Wordsworth's mind began, Coleridge was very busy procuring and reading Neo-Platonic books.(61). In a letter to John Thelwall dated November 19, 1796, he noted how "Dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies".(62). A detailed discussion of Coleridge's interest in Neo-Platonism will be undertaken in the next chapter; it is enough to say here - as Professor Muirhead has shown in his book Coleridge as Philosopher - that from beginning to end, Coleridge remained an Idealist nearest to the Neo-Platonic school of thought. The influence of Coleridge in shaping Wordsworth's philosophical views was very great. Speaking on this topic, Emile Legouis remarks: "It was Coleridge who provided, or rather assisted him to find, the only thing still needful to make him the poet he finally became, namely, a philosophy".(63). In The Prelude, Wordsworth on several occasions admitted how deeply he was influenced by Coleridge. In Bk.III(Line 199), addressing Coleridge, he said, "Friend! who in these thoughts art ever at my side" and in Bk.XIV (Lines 281-82), he accepted that Coleridge's influence had penetrated "to my heart of hearts". In the Preface to The Excursion too he declared that his intellect was deeply indebted to Coleridge. Even late in life

he paid high tributes to Coleridge's mind. In 1834, during the course of a conversation, he acknowledged that Coleridge was the most wonderful man he had ever known, "wonderful for the originality of his mind, and the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems". (64). Both The Prelude and The Excursion were planned in consultation with Coleridge and for this we have his own testimony in his Table-Talk (July 21, 1832) where he has stated that he was partly responsible even for suggesting the theme. The relevant extracts from Coleridge's Table-Talk in this connection have already been quoted while discussing Wordsworth's Anti-Hartleianism. It has to be remembered that apart from the closest personal contact that existed between the two poets during the time Wordsworth wrote his important philosophical poems, when Coleridge was staying at a distance and personal contact was not possible, Wordsworth used to ask for notes from him. We have the clearest indication of it in the following two letters of Wordsworth to Coleridge. Both these letters were written when Coleridge was at Malta. The first is dated the 6th March, 1804. Wordsworth wrote:

"I am very anxious to have your notes for The Recluse. I cannot say how much importance I attach to this; if it should please God that I survive you, I should reproach myself for ever in writing the

work if I had neglected to procure this help".(65).

The second letter is dated March 29th, 1804. It appears to have been written after Wordsworth had received a letter from Coleridge in which the latter had sent some notes *for* The Recluse. The language of the letter shows how deep was the delight of Wordsworth on receiving the notes.

"I will not speak of other thoughts that passed through me, but I cannot help saying that I would gladly have given 3 fourths of my possessions for your letter on The Recluse at that time. I cannot say what a load it would be to me, should I survive you and you die without this memorial left behind".(66).

It seems that his prolonged intimate contact with Coleridge and the notes that he asked for from him, brought Wordsworth very close to Neo-Platonism at a time when he was writing his most significant philosophical poetry. Wordsworth's own mystical intuitions and experiences must have predisposed him towards a ready acceptance of Neo-Platonism as expounded to him by Coleridge.

SUB-SECTION V.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, it should be stated that in emphasising the kinship of Wordsworth's mysticism with Neo-Platonism, it is not intended to suggest that the poet had no other philosophical contacts.

Apart from the bent of his own individual mind, he certainly came in contact with several schools of thought which, to a certain extent, coloured his metaphysical convictions and speculations. To assert that Neo-Platonism is the only key to the entire range of Wordsworth's thought would obviously be to err in the direction of over-simplification. What, however, is being posited is this that Wordsworth's deepest mystical beliefs were of the transcendental kind and there is a striking agreement between his thought and Neo-Platonism on many fundamental points.

So far as the question of the relationship between Wordsworth's mysticism and Oriental philosophy is concerned, it is worthwhile pointing out that over and above imbibing elements of Oriental thought from syncretistic Neo-Platonism, the possibility of other channels of contact also cannot be altogether discounted. First of all, we have to think of the poet's brother, John Wordsworth, who made several voyages to and fro India. John Wordsworth was not an ordinary sailor, but a man of some literary taste and discernment. We find him offering criticisms on the relative merits of Wordsworth's poems and one such evidence survives in the letter which he wrote to the poet from the ill-fated ship, Abergavenny, only a fortnight before he was drowned.(67). On Wordsworth's side, we find him saying in a letter to

James Losh written very soon after John Wordsworth's drowning that he "never wrote a line without a thought of giving him (John Wordsworth) pleasure".(68). It is quite possible that John Wordsworth with his literary interests and curiosity provided the poet with a means of contact with Indian life and thought. Wordsworth's friend, Southey, was also deeply interested in India and his The Curse of Kehama is saturated with direct Orientalism. Coleridge too, early in life, had studied the works of Orientalists like Sir William Jones and Sir Charles Wilkins.(69). The works of Sadi, the famous Persian mystical poet, in translation (in five volumes) were present in Wordsworth's library and Sadi's mysticism is of the Oriental type. The works of Gibbon and Simon Ockley - available in the poet's library - must also, to some extent, have introduced Wordsworth to Oriental ideas.(70). The books on universal religion and theosophy which he had must similarly have added to his interest in and information on this subject.

There are many references to India in Wordsworth's poetry. Out of these only three are quoted below which may be considered as typical. The first refers to the caste-system which was a feature of the Hindu society; the second is a historical glimpse of the time of the Moghul imperial rule. The third quotation is of a peculiar and great importance.

Index of References in CHAPTER V.

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- (69) Vide Muirhead, J.H.: Coleridge as Philosopher, 1930, Appendix C., p.283.
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CHAPTER VIThe Mysticism of Coleridge.SUB-SECTION IThe Mysticism in the poetry of Coleridge.

In discussing and illustrating the mystical philosophy to be found in the poetry of Coleridge, the ideas have been arranged and presented more or less in the same order and sequence as in the case of Wordsworth - which is, in fact, the scheme that has been followed throughout this work. Following the same scheme has the advantage of uniformity and facilitates comparison of ideas. Before starting the discussions, it is necessary to challenge the view which suggests that Coleridge was only a metaphysician and not a mystic. Such a view is championed by Professor J.H. Muirhead who in his article, "Metaphysician or Mystic?" in Coleridge : Studies by Several Hands on the Hundredth Anniversary of His Death, 1934, (1) denies that we get any mysticism in Coleridge. Coleridge was indeed a great metaphysician, the founder of the nineteenth-century British Idealism as Professor Muirhead himself calls him, but his metaphysics has a deeply mystical bias and basis. Metaphysics and Mysticism are not mutually

exclusive categories and one who is a metaphysician may be a mystic as well. Professor Muirhead himself in his book, Coleridge as Philosopher, (2) has shown how the poet remained nearest to the Neo-Platonic philosophers in logic, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of religion, and aesthetics. There is no doubt that the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists is deeply impregnated with mysticism. Coleridge was in touch not only with the Neo-Platonic philosophy, but with the entire mystic and theosophic line of thought. A detailed discussion on this specific point will be presented in the third sub-section of this chapter while considering the probable sources of Coleridge's mysticism. It is enough to point out here that Coleridge, the main channel through which mystic ideas flowed into Wordsworth's poetry, was not without strong mystical leanings himself. Coleridge's philosophical poetry is not considerable in volume, but even from the slender stock we can point out quite a few passages where there is not merely a mystical thought but also a personal mystical experience behind them. Two such passages may be alluded to for our present purposes. One is in This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison (lines 37-43) and the other is in

Hymn Before Sun-Rise In The Vale Of Chamouni

(lines 19-23). Both these passages will be quoted and commented on subsequently in this chapter and it will appear that they contain a description of the expansion of vision and consciousness so typical of mysticism.

We may now proceed to the examination of Coleridge's views on the usual topics.

(a) God:- Coleridge uses the well-known Neo-Platonic names of God, namely, the One, the Good. The Destiny of Nations, opens with an invocation to God in the following words:

"Auspicious Reverence! Hush all meaner
 Ere we the deep preluding strain have ^{song,}
 To the Great Father, only Rightful King, ^{poured}
 Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
 To the Will Absolute, the One, the Good!
 The I AM, the Word, the Life, the Living
 God!"(3).

Another clear echo of the Neo-Platonic terminology occurs in Religious Musings. Musing on the Christmas Eve, Coleridge wrote as follows about the death of Christ:

"... Lovely was the death
 Of Him whose life was Love! Holy with
 He on the thought-benighted Sceptic ^{power}
 Manifest Godhead, melting into day ^{beamed}
 What floating mists of dark idolatry
Broke and misshaped the omnipresent
Sire".(4).

Annotating the line "Broke and misshaped the omnipresent Sire", Coleridge quoted from DAMAS.

DE MYST. AEGYPT which as translated reads thus:
"Men have split up the Intelligible One into the
peculiar attributes of Gods many".(5) In this
quotation, "the Intelligible One", can be traced
directly to the Neo-Platonic nomenclature of God.
In addition to "the One" and "the Good", a third
term used by the Neo-Platonists while referring
to God is "the Beauty". This Beauty, however,
is abstract Beauty, the Beauty which is the source
of all manifested beauty. We find Coleridge also
conceiving of God as the "beauty uncreate".
Speaking of Christ again, in Religious Musings
he wrote:

"Yet nor high grove, nor many-colour'd
mead,
Nor the green ocean with his thousand
isles,
Nor the starred azure, nor the sovran
sun,
E'er with such majesty of portraiture
Imaged the supreme beauty uncreate,
As thou, meek Saviour!"(6).

The entire creation is "parts and Proportions of one wondrous whole" through which this Intelligible One is diffused. The word used is diffused which is suggestive of divine Immanence.

" ... 'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous
whole!
This fraternises man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis
God
Diffused through all, that doth make all
one whole". (7)

In fact, it is the diffusion of the One through all that constitutes the Unity of all that is.

The Many are in the One and the One is omnipresent in the Many. God is revealing this mystery perpetually in His eternal language:

" so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in
himself".(8)

How, in spite of all this seeming multiplicity, there is actually a unity of life and consciousness is explained further in the following lines:

" Others boldlier think
That as the one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organized;
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which
informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
(His one eternal self-affirming act!)
All his involved Monads... ...".(9)

There is only one energy in the Universe, the Divine Energy, and all movements in the vast domain of Nature are due to the acting of the same Force. God is the sole cause and author of all universal phenomena.

"Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and
Heaven!
All-conscious Presence of the Universe!
Nature's vast ever-acting Energy!
In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!
Whether thy Love with unrefracted ray
Beam on the Prophet's purged eye, or if
Diseasing realms the Enthusiast, wild
of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected
throng,

"There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love".(12)

In the Eolian Harp, too, Coleridge speaks of
"one intellectual breeze" sweeping through animate
nature. This "intellectual breeze" is "at once
the Soul of each and God of all". All animate
Nature has a single Soul. Coleridge here is
confining his attention to animate Nature only,
but in view of the passage quoted above regarding
sentient Monads dwelling in mineral and vegetable
Kingdoms, one can be reasonably sure that he would
not have objected to the conception of entire
Nature having a single Soul. If entire Nature
has but one Mind, there is no reason to think
that it does not have a single Soul also.

"And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them
sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual
breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of
all?".(13)

Before these lines, in the same poem, Coleridge talks of "one Life within us and abroad".

"O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its
soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in
light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every
where -
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so
fill'd;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute
still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument".
(14)

unobscured radiance of God. Much of the anguish of life is due to the imperfect vision that we have during our earthly existence.

" Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;
And vice, and anguish, and the wormy
grave,
Shapes of a dream! The veiling clouds
retire, retire,
And lo! the Throne of the redeeming
God
Forth flashing unimaginable day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and
deepest hell!".
(22)

We get a faint trace of Coleridge's accord with the operation of the Law of Karma in human life in the note appended to the following lines in Religious Musings:

"The Saviour comes! While as the
Thousand Years
Lead up their mystic dance, the Desert
shouts!
Old Ocean claps his hands! The mighty
Dead
Rise to new Life, whoso'er from earliest
time
With conscious zeal had urged Love's
wondrous plan,
Coadjutors of God". (23)

The note to the expression "Thousand Years" runs as follows:

"The Millenium:- in which I suppose, that Man will continue to enjoy the highest glory, of which his human nature is capable. - That all who in past ages have endeavoured to ameliorate the state of man will rise and enjoy the fruits and flowers, the imperceptible seeds of which they had sown in their former Life: and that the wicked will during the same period, be suffering the remedies adapted

to their several bad habits. I suppose that this period will be followed by the passing away of this Earth and by our entering the state of pure intellect; when all Creation shall rest from its labours". (24)

The words underlined in this quotation suggest that rewards and punishments after death are the moral consequences of acts done during life.

Man's spirit is immortal. Journeying onward, he rises in the scale of spiritual life. Evolving spiritually, he may reach heights and associate himself with the Great Spirits and the Evolutionary Powers of Nature. Coleridge believes in the immortal destiny of man and his evolutionary possibilities.

"Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material
mass
In organizing surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir!
Till then
I discipline my young and novice thought
In ministries of heart-stirring song".
(25)

(d) Expansion of Consciousness:- All creation is interlinked because it is diffused with one divine life and one divine mind. The more we "saturate" ourselves with this idea, the nearer we come to the Almighty's throne. When our vision

truly been said: "Lose and thou shalt find".

If we lose our individual self, we become merged with the Cosmic Self and possess the sum of things entire.

" Toy-bewitched,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre Man, no common sire,
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
Mid countless brethren with a lonely
heart
Through courts and cities the smooth
savage roams
Feeling himself, his own low self the
whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one Self! Self, that no alien
knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can
travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its
own,
Yet all of all possessing! ...". (27)

The flight of the human soul towards the Divine can be made on the wings of Meditation. There is a power in the human mind with the help of which we can soar aloft to empyreal heights and breathe the rarified air of the realms of Spirit. We experience then communion with "Love, omnific, omnipresent Love", and our spirit is released from its bondage of selfishness.

"And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward
wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal
air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my
soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters - The
glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows".
(28)

There are moments of mystic vision when material objects seem to lose their materiality and assume a celestial hue. The following lines show how at times the earthly landscape becomes "apparelled in celestial light" and everything has the "glory and freshness of a dream".

" ... So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I
 have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing
 round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all
 doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet
 he makes
Spirits perceive his presence". (29)

In an earlier version of this passage, sent in a letter to Southey, the lines stood as below:

"Struck with joy's deepest calm, and
 gazing round
On the wide view may gaze till all doth
 seem
Less gross than bodily; a living thing
That acts upon the mind, and with such
 hues
As clothe th' Almighty Spirit, when he
 makes...". (30)

In this earlier version, we find that things not only become "less gross than bodily", but they seem to be a "living thing that acts upon the mind". Thus the mystic vision is able to transform the landscape into an object endowed with life. The so-called inanimate objects throb with the pulse of, life and act upon the human mind as a living entity. It is important

to note that the entire landscape seems to consist not of so many living things, but becomes just "a living thing", thereby suggesting the oneness of life in the universe as a whole.

The Wordsworthian idea developed in the Preface to The Excursion that the human mind is exquisitely fitted to the external world and the external world too is exquisitely fitted to the human mind with the result that they harmoniously act upon one another is also adumbrated in Coleridge. In the face of the grandeur of majestic Nature, the mind of man expands and the soul dilates and swells "vast to Heaven". Coleridge describes one such personal experience when he watched the dawn in the vale of Chamouni. At such a moment, the mind of man and external Nature become very much identified:

"Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
 So sweet, we know not we are listening to
 Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with ^{it,}
 Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret ^{my Thought,}
 Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, ^{joy:}
 Into the mighty vision passing - there ^{transfused,}
 As in her natural form, swelled vast to
 Heaven!". (31)

SUB-SECTION II.The Affinity Between Coleridge's Mysticism
And Neo-Platonism.

The volume of Coleridge's philosophical poetry is small - much less than that of either Wordsworth or Shelley. We do not have, therefore, elaborate developments of his philosophic ideas in his poetry. Coleridge's great reputation as a philosopher is dependent mostly upon his prose treatises which are, generally speaking, also subsequent in time to his philosophical poetry with which we have concerned ourselves in this chapter. We can see, however, the broad similarities of ideas between his philosophical poetry and Neo-Platonism.

(a) God:- Coleridge uses expressions like "the One", "the Good" and "the Supreme Beauty Uncreate" about God and he also talks about the entire creation being a wondrous whole because one God is diffused through all. He thinks that the One is omnipresent in the Many and all universal phenomena are manifestations of Divine Energy.

(b) The Universe:- The whole universe is a wondrous whole because God is diffused through all things. The entire universe is a Unity of

Life and there is but one omnific Mind working through everything. All Nature has a single Soul. The mineral and vegetable kingdoms of Nature, no less than the animal kingdom, are constituted by sentient Monads. There is an ultimate benign purpose working through all pain and suffering and behind the apparently ugly and deformed, it is the Supreme Fair who is operating. The universe is not a hard, solid, material substance, but largely a construction of the human mind. The phenomenal world is a passing show; it is the world of Ideas which is the Eternal Reality.

(c) Man and Human Evolution:- Coleridge talks of the pre-existence of man's soul before birth and considers the embodied state as a great limitation for the soul. Man's destiny is immortal and journeying through his immortal course, man may reach the heights of spiritual life.

(d) Expansion of Consciousness:- We have to get rid of our narrow self and gradually become conscious of our oneness with the Cosmic Self.

When we forget and lose out little self, we possess the sum of things entire. On Meditation's heaven-ward wing we can fly aloft and commune with the empyreal realms of the Spirit. When we develop the mystic vision, the earthly, material objects seem "less gross than bodily" and every thing takes on a celestial hue. The mind of man

is a thing of awful powers and it is curiously attuned to the external world. Man's consciousness can so expand as to "swell vast to Heaven". This is the state of mystic trance.

The similarity between Neo-Platonism and the philosophical and mystical ideas of Coleridge on all the points set forth above is easily discernible.

SUB-SECTION III.

The Sources of Coleridge's Mysticism.

In trying to assess the sources of the mysticism to be found in the poetry of Coleridge, we should, appropriately enough, first turn towards Coleridge himself. As in the case of Wordsworth, so in Coleridge's, the mysticism of the poet is owing largely to his own personality and the bent of his mind. The mysticism is not grafted on the poet, but is something which grows out of his own mind. In a letter written to Thomas Poole in 1797, just at the time when Coleridge had begun writing his own philosophical poems and was inspiring Wordsworth in the same direction, he describes the native hue of his own mind.

"For from my early reading of fairy tales and geni etc., etc., my mind had been habituated to the Vast, and I never

regarded my senses in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my sight, even at that age. Should children be permitted to read romances, and relations of giants and magicians and geni? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but parts, and all parts are necessarily little. And the universe to them is but a mass of little things. It is true, that the mind may become credulous and prone to superstition by the former method; but are not the experimentalists credulous even to madness in believing any absurdity, rather than believe the grandest truths, if they have not the testimony of their own senses in their favour? I have known some who have been rationaly educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness, but when they looked at great things, all became a blank and they saw nothing, and denied (very logically) that anything could be seen, and uniformly put the negation of a power for the possession of a power, and called the want of imagination judgment and the never being moved to rapture philosophy".(32).

We see the mystical foundations of the poet's personality in the above letter. His transcendentalism becomes apparent from "I never regarded my senses in any way as the criteria of my belief". The universe to him was not "a mass of little things" but a Great Whole. For him philosophy was not microscopic acuteness in reasoning, but imagination, rapture and power. In another letter, dated the 12th March, 1794, he says:

"I met yesterday, smoking in the recess, in a chimney corner of the pot-house at which I am quartered, a man of the greatest information and most original genius I ever lit upon. His philosophical theories of heaven and hell would have both amused you and given you hints for much speculation. He solemnly assured me that he believed himself divinely inspired. He slept in the same room with me, and kept me awake till three in the morning with his ontological disquisitions. Some of the ideas would have made you shudder from their daring impiety, others would have astounded with their sublimity. My memory, tenacious and systematizing, would enable (me) to write and Octavo from his conversation. 'I find (says he) from the intellectual atmosphere that emanates from, and envelops you, that you are in a state of recipiency'. He was deceived. I have little faith, yet am wonderfully fond of speculating on mystical schemes. Wisdom may be gathered from the maddest flight of imagination, as medicines were stumbled upon in the wild processes of alchemy".(33)

In these early years of his poetic career, Coleridge confesses to his having little faith and declares his fondness for free mystical and metaphysical speculations. Coleridge's faith, as time passed, became stronger and stronger, but there was a time when he believed that "Wisdom may be gathered from the maddest flight of imagination, as medicines were stumbled upon in the wild processes of alchemy". Coleridge's very extensive studies have to be viewed against this background of his personality and we are, perhaps, quite justified in stressing his innate mystical tendencies while looking for the sources

of his mysticism.

We can now proceed to examine the impact of Coleridge's studies on his philosophy. The discussion in this sub-section will be divided into (a) the Relationship of Coleridge's Ideas with Contemporary German Transcendental Philosophy and (b) the Relationship of Coleridge's Ideas with Neo-Platonism.

(a) The Relationship of Coleridge's Ideas with Contemporary German Transcendental Philosophy:-

As was pointed out in the previous chapter on Wordsworth, there is no sound basis for the view that the philosophy of Wordsworth or of Coleridge was substantially influenced by the contemporary German Transcendentalists. But Coleridge himself is partly responsible for this general, though vague and largely unfounded, impression of his indebtedness to German thought. Passages like the following in Biographia Literaria have contributed to such an assumption:

"The writings of the illustrious sage of Koenigsberg, the founder of the Critical Philosophy, more than any other work, at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding. The originality, the depth, and the compression of the thoughts; the novelty and subtlety, yet solidity and importance of the distinctions; the adamant chain of the logic, and, I will venture to add (paradox as it will appear to those who have taken their notion of Immanuel Kant from Reviewers and Frenchmen), the

clearness and evidence of the Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Judgment, of the Metaphysical Elements of Natural Philosophy, and his Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason, took possession of me with a giant's hand".
(34)

Coleridge was quite prolific in such utterances and though he never implied that he borrowed anything from Germany, his own expressions lent countenance to such a view. Professor J.H. Muirhead, writing in his book Coleridge as Philosopher observes in this connexion:

"From the same book (Biographia Literaria) we know there was a period of his life at which he felt himself so much at one with Schelling's philosophy that he was prepared to risk his reputation for literary honesty by adopting whole portions of its text as the basis of his own theory of poetry. All this, combined with the unanimous testimony of his friends as to the impressions which his conversations left upon them, would lend countenance to the view that his own philosophy was little more than a transcript from the German of Kant and Schelling, from whom he selected what happened to suit him. But this would be a superficial view of the real state of the case, and one of the first results of a closer study of his philosophical opinions as a whole is the conviction of its entire baselessness".
(35)

Coleridge later had to contend against the mistaken opinion of the literary public regarding the influence of German philosophy on him, created by his own exuberant and enthusiastic appreciation of the German philosophers. In a letter to his literary disciple, J.H. Green, dated December 13, 1817, after discussing his differences on some

fundamental points with the important German philosophers like Kant, Fichte and Schelling, he observes: "As my opinions were formed before I was acquainted with the school of Fichte and Schelling, so do they remain independent of them, though I con- and pro-fess great obligations to them in the development of my thoughts, and yet seem to feel that I should have been more useful, had I been left to evolve them myself without knowledge of their coincidence".(36) Coleridge accepts that his mind was stimulated by German metaphysics and he received some help from it in the clear apprehension of his own ideas, but asserts that all his ideas had been formed before he became acquainted with it, and at best, the relationship between his own views and those of contemporary German metaphysicians was one of coincidence. A much clearer statement of the same position is given by Coleridge in a letter to his nephew, John Taylor Coleridge, dated April 8, 1825, when the latter approached him to help a German author then in England. Coleridge regrets that he cannot do much in this case as he had lost prestige with the literary world because of his supposed German borrowings and says:

"The prejudices excited against me by Jeffry, combining with the mistaken notion of my German Metaphysics to which (I am told) some passages in some biographical

gossip book about Lord Byron (Conversations of Lord Byron, etc., by Captain Medwin) have given fresh currency, have rendered my authority with the Trade worse than nothing. Of the three schemes of philosophy, Kant's, Fichte's, and Schelling's (as diverse each from the other as those of Aristotle, Zeno, and Plotinus, though all crushed together under the name of Kantian Philosophy in the English talk) I should find it difficult to select the one from which I differed the most, though perfectly easy to determine which of the three men I hold in highest honour. And Immanuel Kant I assuredly value most highly; not, however, as a metaphysician, but as a logician who has completed and systematised what Lord Bacon had boldly designed and loosely sketched out in the Miscellany of Aphorisms, his *Novum Organum*. In Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" there is more than one fundamental error; but the main fault lies in the title-page, which to the manifold advantage of the work might be exchanged for 'An Inquisition respecting the Constitution and Limits of the Human Understanding'. I cannot only honestly assert, but I can satisfactorily prove by reference to writings (Letters, Marginal Notes, and those in books that have never been in my possession since I first left England for Hamburg, etc.) that all the elements, the differentials, as the algebraists say, of my present opinions existed for me before I had even seen a book of German Metaphysics, later than Wolf and Leibnitz, or could have read it, if I had. But what will this avail? A High German Transcendentalist I must be content to remain, and a young American painter, Leslie (pupil and friend of a very dear friend of mine, Allston), to whom I have been in the habit for ten years and more of shewing as cordial regards as I could to a near relation, has, I find, introduced a portrait of me in a picture from Sir W. Scott's 'Antiquary' as Dr. Duster Swivil, or whatever his name is". (37)

Coleridge, then, did not imbibe new ideas from

the contemporary German Philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Schelling. He found general correspondences - with several important differences as well - between the ideas he had already received and formed and the philosophy of the German thinkers. The position becomes clear enough from the following in Biographia Literaria: "It was in Schelling's Natur-Philosophie and System des transcendental (en) Idealismus that I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself and a powerful assistance to what I had yet to do".(38)

This idea of 'genial coincidence' is further elucidated by J.H. Green, the disciple of Coleridge, in Introduction to Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit:

"In the case of a work which is an aggregate and not a growth...it would be as just to reclaim, as it would be easy to detach the borrowed fragments; but where the work is the result of a formative principle which gives it unity and totality, where the thoughts and reasonings are the developments of a living principle to an organic whole, it may be safely assumed that the author, who interweaves with his own the kindred products of other men's minds, is impelled only by the sense and pleasurable sympathy of a common intellectual activity, and that he would or might have arrived at the same or similar results where these are potentially contained in the principle that gave birth to his reasonings".(39)

While the position with regard to the influence

of German philosophy is, as shown above, that Coleridge found genial coincidences between the ideas he had "toiled out" for himself and those of the contemporary German philosophers, the purely literary influences too are not such as to justify the use of the term "borrowing of ideas" from German literature by him. F.W. Stokoe, who examined the entire question of German influence in the English Romantic period, and who has already been quoted with reference to Wordsworth in the previous chapter, says the following about Coleridge:

"Summing up, we may venture on the following generalisations. Coleridge had a mind closely akin to the contemporary critical and philosophical thought of Germany. On the literary side his affinities with German writers are much less strongly marked than on the philosophical side, and his knowledge of the literature, though excelled by few of his English contemporaries in the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, was by no means thorough. The discernible German influence on his literary work is in general slight. He translated or adapted a number of poems, but with few exceptions the originals are by authors of little note. His opinions of German literature are for the most part rather superficial; they represent an outside, unsympathetic, and in many cases a very insular point of view. His fairly abundant utterances on German literature leave us with the impression that, while he had read widely in it, at least in comparison with most of his contemporaries, yet he had no grasp of the literature as a whole, and little comprehension of the development it was undergoing in his lifetime. In

Romanticism, as a literary movement, he seems to have taken little or no interest, though he was keenly interested in Romantic philosophical speculation. His failure to appreciate Goethe and Schiller at their true value is striking, more especially in the case of the former. Doubtless he encouraged in some degree interest in German literature by his conversation, and at an earlier period by his active pre-occupation with it; but the latter is mainly previous to his visit to Germany, and his later conversations were directed mainly to metaphysical speculations. Coleridge contributed chiefly to the understanding of German literature in England by his translation, in many respects excellent, of Schiller's Piccolomini and Wallenstein's Tod; for the rest, his real though rather distorted and limited interest in it probably served to impress people with a sense of its importance. But he had fewer opportunities of making his opinions on the subject known than had Crabbe Robinson...".(40)

(b) The Relationship of Coleridge's Ideas With

Neo-Platonism:- Coleridge, it seems, had a far

more intimate contact with Neo-Platonic

philosophy than with German Transcendentalism.

He also seems to have had a fuller measure of

agreement with it. The poems we have quoted from

in the first sub-section of this chapter to

illustrate the philosophical ideas of Coleridge

were all composed between 1795 and 1802.

E.H. Coleridge fixes the chronology of the poems

concerned, in the Oxford Editions of Standard

Authors, as follows:

1795 - The Eolian Harp.

1794-96 - Religious Musings.

1796 - The Destiny of Nations.

- 1797 - This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison.
- 1798 - Frost At Midnight.
- 1802 - Dejection: An Ode.
- Hymn Before Sun-Rise in the Vale
of Chamouni.

It will be of our particular interest, therefore, to scrutinise Coleridge's studies and discern the trend of his mind before 1802.

Coleridge's interest in Neo-Platonism began very early and we can once more recall the description given by Charles Lamb in Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago. Essays of Elia, of this "young Mirandula...unfolding in (his) deep and sweet intonations the Mysteries of Iamblichus and Plotinus". While still a young boy, Coleridge had also translated the recondite Hymns of the Neo-Platonist Synesius. In 1796, in a letter to John Thelwall, Coleridge tells us how books on philosophy in general and on mystical philosophy in particular were his "darling studies". This letter is an important document from the point of Coleridge's interest in Neo-Platonism, firstly because it indicates how, near about 1796, he was deeply pre-occupied with the study of books of the Neo-Platonic school and those near to it and secondly because we have a record in it of the Neo-Platonic books that he purchased through Thelwall at that time. This letter deserves to be quoted at some length:

"I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything - a library cormorant. I am deep in all out of the way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not like history. Metaphysics and poetry and 'facts of mind', that is, accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed 'your philosophy'; dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies. In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading... I am just going to read Dupuis' twelve octavos, which I have just got from London. I shall read only one octavo a week, for I cannot speak French at all and read it slowly.

P.S. I have enclosed a five-guinea note. The five shillings over please to lay out for me thus. In White's (of Fleet Street or the Strand, I forget which - O! the Strand I believe, but I don't know which), well in White's catalogue are the following books:-
 4674. Iamblichus, Proclus, Porphyrius, etc., one shilling and six pence, one little volume.
 4686. Juliani Opera, three shillings: which two books you will be so kind as to purchase for me, and send down with the twenty-five pamphlets. But if they should unfortunately be sold, in the same catalogue are:-
 2109. Juliani Opera, 12s.6d.
 676. Iamblichus de Mysteriis, 10s.6d.
 2681. Sidonius Apollinaris, 6s.
 And in the catalogue of Robson, the Bookseller in New Bond Street, Plotini Opera, A Ficin^o, £1.1.0 making altogether £2.10.0".

(Note to the above by E.H. Coleridge, the Editor: Thelwall executed his commission. The Iamblichus and the Juliani were afterwards presented by Coleridge to his son Derwent. They are still in possession of the family). (41)

Professor J.L. Lowes in The Road to Xanadu has commented on this important letter of Coleridge and brought out how this interest in Neo-Platonism was "one of his inveterate pre-occupations" for Coleridge all his life long. He has also pointed out how the twelve octavos of Dupuis which Coleridge was reading in 1796 (vide letter to Thelwall quoted above) are deeply saturated with Neo-Platonism.

"The postscript is a bead-roll of Coleridge's 'dreamers'. 'Thoth the Egyptian' (Milton's 'thrice-great Hermes') is there, concealed beneath the pregnant 'etc.' of the 'one little volume' which heads the memorandum. 'Taylor the English pagan', otherwise Thomas Taylor the Platonist, credulous, uncritical, and pedestrian in style, but fired with the ardour of a devotee, was doing for England what Marsilio Ficino, three centuries before, had done for Italy, and was at the moment busily translating everybody mentioned in Coleridge's list - Iamblichus, Proclus, Porphyrius, Julian and Plotinus - with the sole exception of Sidonius Apollinaris. Nor was this commission to Thelwall Coleridge's first or last attempt to possess himself, by hook or crook, of his precious purveyors of strange phantasms. In a batch of memoranda of 1807, which no one who would see how Coleridge browsed, or (better, grazed) in bookshops can afford to overlook, he is still proposing to 'hunt for Proclus'. Charles Lamb wrote racily in 1796, and again in 1814, about pressing instructions from Coleridge to pick up Plutarch and Porphyry and Proclus...And Iamblichus and Plotinus and their followers down to Pico starred his pages to the end. The errand on which Thelwall was dubiously sent to either Fleet Street or the Strand not only exhibits one of Coleridge's inveterate

pre-occupations, but also epitomizes one of the strangest tendencies which marked the tumultuous exit of the century. For Neo-Platonism was again in the air, and in Coleridge's postscript Bristol and London join hands, through Florence, with Alexandria, Constantinople, Athens, and Rome - the eighteenth century, through the fifteenth, with the Platonizing third, fourth and fifth.

But what of Dupuis's twelve octavos which Coleridge was painfully going through, a volume a week, in French? Well, if Thomas Taylor was the plodding British counterpart of Marsilio Ficino, the Eighteenth century had also its flock of inglorious, though anything but mute, Mirandolas, and the voluminous Dupuis was one of them.

The title of his work is "Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle, ...explicit in its footnotes and implicit in its text are the ubiquitous Neo-Platonists - Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Julian, Hermes, and Marsilio Ficino..." (42)

It would also be quite reasonable to assume that Coleridge came into contact with the works and thoughts of the Cambridge Platonists while he was at the University. It would be most improbable that a man of his philosophic mind would have remained unaffected by the revived interest in Platonism at Cambridge. Professor J.H. Muirhead, speaking about the period of Coleridge's stay at Cambridge says: "We shall probably be right also in referring to this period his acquaintance with the Cambridge Platonists, whose writings would harmonize with what he might have learned from Plato and Plotinus, and go to deepen the mystic strain in

his thought".(43)

That Coleridge was gradually turning towards transcendentalism is also evident from his letter to Thomas Poole dated March 16, 1801. He declares, in this letter, that he had completely overthrown the doctrines of Associationism and Necessitarianism. He is equally dissatisfied with Newton's conception of the mind as a passive agent. This idea he dwells upon, only a week after the above letter to Poole, in another letter to him again. Relevant extracts from both these letters are placed below:

"If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only completely extricated the notions of time and space, but have overthrown the doctrine of association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels - especially the doctrine of necessity. This I have done, but I trust I am about to do more - namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from one sense, and to state their growth and the causes of their difference, and in this involvement to solve the process of life and consciousness".(44)

"Newton was a mere materialist. Mind, in his system, is always passive, - a lazy Looker-on on an external world. If the mind be not passive, if it indeed be made in God's Image, and that too, in the sublimest sense, the Image of the Creator, there is ground for suspicion that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system".
(45)

In 1801, we find Coleridge reading Duns Scotus and "burning Locke, Hume, and Hobbes under

his (Duns Scotus's) nose. They stink worse than feather or assafoetida".(46) And in 1803, he writes to Southey: "I have received great delight and instruction from Scotus Erigena. He is clearly the modern founder of the school of Pantheism; indeed he expressly defines the divine nature as quae et facit, et creat et creatur; and repeatedly declares creation to be a manifestation, the epiphany of philosophers. The eloquence with which he writes astonished me, but he had read more Greek than Latin, and was a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian". (47)

John Scotus Erigena, from whom Coleridge received great delight and instruction and about whom he writes so enthusiastically, had been profoundly influenced by Neo-Platonically-inspired thinkers and writers like Augustine, Boethius and Maximas and his ideas come very close to the doctrines of Neo-Platonism on all important points. We read the following account of John Scotus Erigena and his teachings in the 1951 edition of

Encyclopaedia Britannica:

"Erigena...is one of the most interesting of mediaeval writers. Utilizing especially Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Boethius and Maximas, he transforms them with the monistic colouring of the pseudo-Dionysius... Logically...he is a pantheist, following in the wake of the psuedo-Dionysius

whom he regards as the convert of St. Paul...In any case, predestination could only be to grace and happiness, for evil is merely negation of good; and moreover, if God knew evil, He would cause it because His knowledge and His will are identical...

...the created universe...is the manifestation of God, God in processu, Theophania...Neither the ideas nor individual creatures have any self-independent existence; they are only in God; and each thing is a manifestation of the divine. God alone, the uncreated creator of all, has true being. He is the true universal, all-containing, infinite and incomprehensible. True theology must be negative, for God is above truth, wisdom, goodness, etc. (In this sense, He is nothing, and hence the nothing out of which things are created is identifiable with the divine nature)...

From the infinite essence of God emanates the realm of ideas in the Platonic sense...

The most remarkable and at the same time the most obscure portion of the work is that in which the final return to God is handled. Naturally, sin is a preliminary to this redemption, but Erigena has great difficulty in accounting for it. If God is true being, then sin can have no substantive existence; it cannot be said that God knows sin, for to God, knowing and being are one. In the universe of things, as a universe, there can be no sin; there must be perfect harmony. Sin, in fact, results from the will of the individual who falsely represents something as good which is not so. This misdirected will is punished by finding that the desired objects are vain, and hell is the inner state of the sinful will. The result of punishment is the final purification and redemption of all, even animals and devils. The ultimate goal is deificatio or resumption into the Divine Being, when the individual soul is raised to a full knowledge of God, and where knowing and being are one".

Coleridge was drawn towards the pantheism of Erigena and repelled from that of Spinoza because while to Erigena all creation is Theophany and hence living, Spinoza's pantheism is soulless. Dissatisfied with Spinoza, Coleridge said: "Did philosophy start with an it is instead of an I am, Spinoza would be altogether true".(49)

Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's The Excursion, which has been cited in the previous chapter on Wordsworth, also shows how in planning The Excursion along with Wordsworth, his intention was to have a complete refutation of the philosophy of Hartley, Locke etc. and a full vindication of the mind as the lord and master of all the senses. Such a theory of the mind, as we are aware, is regarded by the mystics as the basis of their transcendental experiences and is the central doctrine of Neo-Platonism.

Before this sub-section is concluded, it may be re-iterated that Professor J.H. Muirhead who examined the entire philosophical position of Coleridge in his book, Coleridge as Philosopher, (1930), found that Coleridge comes nearest to the Neo-Platonists in his metaphysics, philosophy of religion and aesthetics.

SUB-SECTION IV.Conclusion.

As at the time of concluding the chapter on Wordsworth, so now, it is important to stress that in the foregoing discussions we have not sought to interpret Coleridge's poetry as a whole, not even to unweave all the threads from the texture of his philosophical poetry. Coleridge was a person of remarkable versatility and his studies were very extensive. He has described himself as "a library cormorant" and all Coleridgean scholars will agree that this was not indulging in pedantic self-glorification by Coleridge. His interests were so many-sided that many would agree with the remark of Sir William Rowan Hamilton that "Coleridge is rather to be considered as a Faculty than as a Mind".(50) Indeed, the variety of his intellectual occupations far exceeds the normal limits of a single personality. We have only tried here to analyse one element of his philosophic poetry and to show how many of his ideas are closely akin to those of the Neo-Platonic philosophers.

On the question of Coleridge's direct contact with Oriental thought, we have a document of the greatest importance in a Coleridge manuscript now preserved in Henry E. Huntington Library in

San Marino, California. Excerpts from this manuscript, relevant to our present issue were first published in J.H. Muirhead's book, Coleridge as Philosopher (1930), in the form of an Appendix. We quote from this Appendix in Muirhead's book mentioned above:

"The translator of the Bhagvad Gita finds in the story of churning the ocean for the fourteen jewels, a wonderful affinity to - Milton! I could not, I confess, help inferring from this remark that taste does not resemble the wines that improve by a voyage to and from India. For if there be one character of genius predominant in Milton it is this, that he never passes off bigness for greatness...

It would be more than we are entitled to expect of the human mind, if Sir W. Jones, Mr. Wilkins, etc. great and good as we know them to have been, had not over-rated the merits of works, the power of understanding which is of such rare occurrence, and so difficultly attained...

Their undoubted antiquity is so great, and the antiquity claimed for them at once so daring and so visionary that we might almost say 'liber ipse superstat', the book itself walks like a ghost of a departed world. There is a superstition involved in a survival so contrary to the ordinary experience of mankind. I have myself paid this debt of homage on my first presentation to these foreign potentates by aid of the great linguists above mentioned. But having done so, I sought to purge the sight with the euphrasy of commonsense and took a second and more leisurely view before I put the question to myself, 'And what then have I seen ?

'What are

These Potentates of inmost Ind ?' "

(51)

It is a late manuscript of Coleridge and he is frankly critical about the importance of the oriental books which he had read in translations by Sir William Jones and Sir Charles Wilkins. But his confession that "I have myself paid this debt of homage on my first presentation to these foreign potentates by aid of the great linguists above mentioned" is of great significance to our present purpose. Though later Coleridge changed his opinion regarding the value of the books translated by Sir W. Jones and Sir C. Wilkins - as indeed he changed his opinion on many matters - yet, when young and when he was writing the philosophical poems with which we have been concerned in our present work, he was paying his "debt of homage" to these oriental books. Sir C. Wilkins's translation of The Bhagavadgita appeared in 1785 with an interesting foreword by Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India. This was followed by his translation of Heetopades in 1787. Among the works of Sir W. Jones, the following were published in the years as noted below:

- (a) Sacontala - 1789.
- (b) Dissertations...relating to the histories and antiquities of Asia - 1793.
- (c) Part of the Institutes of Manoo, on transmigration and final beatitude - 1793.
- (d) Manu-Institutes of Hindi Law - 1796.
- (e) The works of Sir William Jones - with a discourse on the life and writings of

(e) cont.

Sir W. Jones by Lord Teignmouth -
6 Vols, 1799.

Most of the books enumerated above are on Hindu religion and philosophy. A particular mention has to be made of The Bhagavadgita which, as is well-known, is a very important source-book of Indian philosophy and mysticism. In Chapter II of our present work - the chapter on Oriental Mysticism - several verses from The Bhagavadgita have been cited. A clue about the time Coleridge had begun reading these oriental books is to be found in his letter to John Thelwall, dated October 16, 1797. After quoting several lines from the poem we know as This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison in that letter, Coleridge goes on to say: "It is but seldom that I raise and spiritualize my intellect to this height; and at other times I adopt the Brahmanic creed...I should much wish, like the Indian Vishnu to float about along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotus, and wake once in a million years for a few minutes just to know that I was going to sleep a million years or more".(52) The reference here is to a highly symbolical story in the Hindy mythology. Evidently in 1797, Coleridge had begun studying some of the oriental works in translation by Sir William Jones and Sir Charles Wilkins.

As expected, the study of a "library cormorant" like Coleridge, in books of oriental interest, was not confined to the translations by Sir William Jones and Sir Charles Wilkins. Professor J.L. Lowes, in his The Road to Xanadu finds the influence of at least three other books on India on Coleridge's poems. These are (1) Thomas Maurice's History of Hindustan (1795); (2) Major Rennel's Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan (1793) and (3) F. Bernier's Voyage to Surat (1664). The first two books are mentioned by Coleridge himself in his Note Book. Professor Lowes quotes the following entry in Coleridge's Note Book:

" Hymns Moon,
In a cave in the mountains of Cashmere an Image of Ice, which makes its appearance thus - two days before the new moon there appears a bubble of Ice which increases in size every day till the 15th day, at which it is an ell or more in height: then as the moon decreases, the Image does also till it vanishes.
Read the whole 107th page of Maurice's Indostan". (53)

The original passage in Maurice's History of Hindustan is as follows:

"I have already noticed the remarkable circumstance of 360 fountains...sacred to the moon at Kehrah, a town in Cashmere; Cashmere, probably the most early residence of the Brahmins, and the theatre of the purest rites of their theology.

In a cave of the same mountainous subah, a very singular phaenomenon is said, in the Ayeen Akbery, at certain periods to make its appearance...In this cave, says Abul Fazil, is sometimes to be seen an image of ice called AMERNAUT, which is holden in great veneration. The image makes its appearance after the following manner - (the rest is substantially as Coleridge sets it down)". (54)

The following passage from Major Rennel's Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan is also of great interest to students of Coleridge's poetry:

"The valley or country of Cashmere, is celebrated throughout upper Asia for its romantic beauties, (and) for the fertility of its soil...It is...surrounded by steep mountains, that tower above the regions of snow; and...its soil is composed of the mud deposited by a capital river, which originally formed its waters into a lake...until it opened itself a passage through the mountains...The author of the Ayin Acharee dwells with rapture on the beauties of Cashmere...Only light showers fall there: these, however, are in abundance enough to feed some thousands of cascades, which are precipitated into the valley, from every part of the stupendous and romantic bulwark that encircles it...In a word, the whole scenery is beautifully picturesque; and a part of the romantic circle of mountains, makes up a portion of every landscape. The pardonable superstition of the sequestered inhabitants, has multiplied the places of worship of Mahadeo (whose image it was that appeared in the cave), of Bishen, and of Brama. All Cashmere is holy land; and miraculous fountains abound... To sum up the account of Cashmere, in the words of (Abul Fazil), 'It is a garden in perpetual spring' ".(55)

In view of the entries into Coleridge's Note Book about Maurice and Rennel, it can be regarded as incontrovertible, as Professor Lowes holds, that the passages (from Maurice and Rennel) quoted above contributed to the weird landscape and the magic caves of Kubla Khan. The "library cormorant" was not slack in browsing in Orient fields.

Index of References in CHAPTER VI.

(Note:- All quotations from Coleridge's texts are from The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Oxford Edition of Standard Authors, Oxford University Press, 1951).

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- (2) Muirhead, J.H.: Coleridge as Philosopher, 1930.
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- (4) Ibid, Religious Musings, 11.28-33, p.110, (Italics mine).
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- (7) Ibid, 11.126-31, pp.113-14.
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CHAPTER VII.The Mysticism of Percy Bysshe Shelley. *SUB-SECTION I.Introductory.

Before examining the poems of Shelley for the mystical thought to be found therein, it may be of interest to take a brief note of certain traits of his mental make-up. As in the present study we are not concerned with his radical social and political thought, but with his metaphysical abstractions and mystical apprehensions, we shall be content to give a few details of the idealistic colour of his mind and of his mystical faculties.

"I am formed", wrote Shelley to Godwin in 1817, "if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the

* I wish to acknowledge my particular indebtedness to Mr. Peter Butter's Shelley's Idols of the Cave (1954) for my understanding of many of Shelley's ideas, particularly of his symbolism.

I also wish to record that Prof. J.A. Notoopoulos's The Platonism of Shelley (1949) was of great help to me in my study of Shelley's relationship with Platonism and Neo-Platonism.

material universe as a whole".(1) Shelley, therefore, had the power to observe and apprehend minute things and, at the same time, he could theorise about the moral and the material universe as a whole. Then again, when he looked at material things, he was not satisfied with knowing their physical qualities, but wanted to understand their ultimate spiritual significance. "You know I always seek in what I see the manifestation of something beyond the present and tangible object".(2)

This idealising bent of his mind is apparent in many of his letters. We can take a few instances. In 1811, he wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener: "Every day makes me feel more keenly that our being is eternal. Every day brings the conviction how futile, how inadequate, are all reasonings to demonstrate it".(3) Similarly, speaking about love, he wrote to Hogg: "The question is, what do I love? It is almost unnecessary to answer. Do I love the person, the embodied identity, if I may be allowed the expression? No! I love what is superior, what is excellent, or what I conceive to be so...".(4) And writing to John Gisborne on the same subject, he said: "I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits

cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal".(5) A still more clear enunciation of his idealistic attitude towards love was made by him when he wrote to John Gisborne again on the publication of *Epipsychidion*: "The *Epipsychidion* is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin-shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me".(6)

His senses were very acute and had heightened powers. He wrote to Claire Clairmont that "the wind, the light, the air, the smell of a flower affects me with violent emotions", (7) and he informed Godwin that "My feelings at intervals are of...such unnatural and keen excitement, that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopical distinctness".(8) "He was also given to waking dreams in which he appeared unconscious of his surroundings".(9) He was psychic and several examples are recorded of his psychic nature. "There is the incident in which Shelley was seen to pass through the garden, whilst, as it was

proved, being elsewhere at the time; the instance of his confronting his own apparition; the instance of the wraith of Byron's dead child, Allegra, calling to Shelley from the waves".(10) Early in life, he became interested in ghosts and incantations and believed that knowledge could be gained more through these means "than through the stale and tainted instruction of schoolmasters".(11) Shelley tells us how "While yet a boy I sought for ghosts", and in The Revolt of Islam: Dedication To Mary - (line 38), he speaks of his always earnestly trying to "heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore".

His metaphysical and occult speculations led Shelley on to vegetarianism and abstinence from drink. The first reference to his practice of vegetarianism is found in Harriet Shelley's letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, dated March 14, 1812, in which she wrote: "You do not know that we have forsworn meat and adopted the Pythagorean system".(12) It must, however, be admitted that though Shelley always remained an ardent propagandist of vegetarianism, his own practice of it was only intermittent. He nearly always, however, abstained from drink.

Shelley considered it essential that men

should have complete freedom of religious belief and to him all religious dogmas were anathema. He remained unreconciled to Christianity till the very end of his life. Less than three months before his death, he wrote to Horace Smith: "I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world....I agree with him, that the doctrines of the French, and Material Philosophy, are as false as they are pernicious; but still they are better than Christianity, inasmuch as anarchy is better than despotism; for this reason, that the former is for a season, and the latter is eternal".(13) This, in fact, was his attitude not only towards Christianity, but towards all organized religions. He considered all established religions to be based not on the love of God, but to be "the child of cold prejudice and selfish fear. Love of a Deity, of Allah, Bramah (it is all the same), certainly springs from the latter motive; is this love? You know well, it is not".(14) Opposed as he was to all organized religions, he believed in and advocated complete tolerance for and among followers of different religions and even for atheists. In his letter to Lord Ellenborough, who had condemned Daniel Isaac Eaton to imprisonment and pillory for his anti-Christian writings, Shelley stated in

1812: "The time is rapidly approaching, I hope that you, my Lord, may live to behold its arrival, when the Mahometan, the Jew, the Christian, the Deist, and the Atheist, will live together in one community, equally sharing the benefits which arise from its association, and united in the bond of charity and brotherly love".(15)

This attitude of toleration for everybody in religious matters made Shelley an eclectic in his philosophy and he wished to write a great work "embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonising the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled".(16)

It is against this idealistic and eclectic colour of Shelley's mind that we have to examine his metaphysical and mystical ideas to which we now proceed.

SUB-SECTION II.

The Mysticism in the Poetry of Shelley.

In this sub-section, we propose to follow in general the same scheme of classification and arrangement of ideas as in the corresponding sections of the previous chapters on Wordsworth and Coleridge and on Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism. The topics for discussion will,

therefore, as usual, be: (I) God; (II) The Universe; (III) Man; (IV) The Evolution of Life and (V) Expansion of Consciousness and Human Destiny.

(I) God.

(a) The Transcendent; - In June 1812, in a letter to Lord Ellenborough, Shelley wrote:

"Moral qualities are such as only a human being can possess. To attribute them to the Spirit of the Universe, or to suppose that it is capable of altering them, is to degrade God into man, and to annex to this incomprehensible Being qualities incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It may be here objected: Ought not the Creator to possess the perfections of the creature? No. To attribute to God moral qualities of man, is to suppose him susceptible of passions, which, arising out of corporeal organisation, it is plain that a pure Spirit cannot possess".(17)

This comes very near to the conception of an unknowable transcendent Deity, utterly passionless and without any qualities. We can compare this conception of the Godhead with the attitude in Mont Blanc where

"Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible".(18)

The description of The One in the Song of the Spirits in Scene III, Act II, Prometheus Unbound, is also strongly suggestive of the transcendence of the Ultimate Power. The One is enthroned deep down below all things which "seem and are",

beyond not only the gloom of Earth, but also the radiance of Heaven:

"Through the gray, void abyss,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crag wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone,
Down, down!" (19)

This description is curiously similar to the one given in the Katha-Upanishad about the utter remoteness of the dwelling-place of Supreme Power:

"The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. When he shines everything shines after him; by his light all this is lighted".(20)

(b) The Immanent:- It is difficult to say precisely whether Shelley believed in Pantheism or in Immanentism, but in the light of his utterances about the transcendence of the Deity presented just above, it may be possible to understand him as an Immanentist. Peter Butter in Shelley's Idols of the Cave, while discussing Adonais, observes that this poem "expresses first of all, his faith in the One Spirit, which is both immanent in nature and transcendent".(21)

The following passage from Queen Mab may be interpreted as an expression of Shelley's Immanentism - the "Spirit of Nature" being conceived

of as dwelling in, but not identified with,
"this interminable wilderness of worlds" or the
beings who share its "eternal breath";

"Spirit of Nature ! here !
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee:
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in graves and fattens on the
dead
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature ! thou !
Imperishable at this scene,
Here is thy fitting temple".(22)

The following two quotations from Adonais and Prince Athanase respectively may also be taken to support an Immanentist attitude:

" ... the one spirit's plastic stress..
... bursting in its beauty and its
 might
From trees and beasts and men into the
 Heaven's
 light".(23)

"Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is
all
We can desire, O Love ! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn
fall,
Catch thee, and feed from their
o'overflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial
dew;-
Thou art the radiance which where ocean
rolls
Investeth it; and when the heavens are
blue
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is
fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

"In this sense I acknowledge a God, but merely as a synonyme for the existing power of existence...I do not in this (nor can you do, I think) recognize a being which has created that to which it is confessedly annexed as an essence, as that without which the universe would not be what it is. It is therefore the essence of the universe, the universe is the essence of it. It is another word for the essence of the universe". (26) ✓

In both the extracts placed above, God remains the actuating principle or the essence of the universe. This attitude can be construed to be in harmony with the idea of Immanentism, but in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, dated January 2, 1812, Shelley becomes definitely a Pantheist, equating the universe completely with God.

"I have lately had some conversation with Southey which has elicited my true opinions of God. He says I ought not to call myself an atheist, since in reality I believe that the universe is God. I tell him I believe that God is another signification for the universe". (27) ✓

Again in his notes on Queen Mab, Shelley similarly talks of a Deity "co-eternal with the universe". (28) He never seems to have made a clear distinction between Immanentism and Pantheism. ✓

(c) The One and The Many:- The relationship between The One and The Many is best expressed by Shelley in these famous lines of Adonais:

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's
shadows fly". (29) ✓

Behind the fleeting shadows of the many,
shines the eternal Reality of The One. As soon
as Death removes for us the illusory show re-
flected through life's dome of many-coloured
glass, and our vision is cleared, we face the
Truth and see the Oneness of the inner Reality.

II - The Universe.

(a) The universe is alive and every particle is
sentient:- Writing to Elizabeth Hitchener in
November 1811, Shelley stated his belief that the
whole Nature is "but a mass of organized animation".
He said:

"I will say, then, that all Nature is
animated, that microscopic vision, as it
hath discovered to us millions of animated
beings whose pursuits and passions are as
eagerly followed as our own; so might it,
if extended, find that Nature itself
was but a mass of organized animation". (30)

While the entire Nature constitutes an organic
whole, every single particle in the universe is
alive and sentient. The minutest atom lives,
thinks and feels as much as a human being does.

"I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,
Think, feel and live like man". (31)

Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient, both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds". (32)

The same picture is presented in Prometheus Unbound (Act IV., Sc. IV.), when Demogorgon addresses the elemental Genii:

"Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central
Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted
To the dull weed some sea-worm batten
on"...(33)

In fact, the entire action in Prometheus Unbound, particularly when the whole of Nature is made to share in the regeneration following the liberation of Prometheus, is calculated to present the indivisible unity of the universe. Furthermore, in this vast Cosmos, every particle, which is alive and sentient, performs its appointed task and nothing happens by chance. The Universal Spirit is guiding the course of events.

"Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering
All seems unlinked contingency and chance:
No atom of this turbulence fulfills
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
Fulfills its destined, though invisible
The universal Spirit guides". (34)

In his essay On Life, Shelley, almost in the language of Plotinus (35), asserted that each living being is a microcosm and life is present everywhere indivisibly and integrally:

"This is the character of all life and being.

Each is at once the centre and the circumference; the point to which all things are referred, and the line in which all things are contained". (36)

Thus, we can see "the world in a grain of sand", because the grain of sand possesses the entire might and glory of the whole world.

With such a view of the universe, Matter in Shelley does not remain a solid, material substance. It becomes a fluid, dynamic thing and its materiality vanishes into the thin air. In A Refutation of Deism, Shelley wrote:

"Matter, such as we behold it, is not inert. It is infinitely active and subtile. Light, electricity and magnetism are fluids not surpassed by thought itself in tenuity and activity; like thought they are sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect of motion; and distinct as they are from every other class of substances with which we are acquainted, seem to possess equal claims with thought to the unmeaning distinction of immateriality". (37)

Peter Butter points to the inconsistency in Shelley's attitude towards matter. He says: "As to spirit and matter, he (Shelley) propounds no consistent doctrine. To the end he continues to speak of matter sometimes as dead, inert 'dross' resistant to the influence of spirit upon it; at other times, as illusory, a 'vision' (Hellas, 780), existing ^{only} in so far as perceived by mind or thought, which is the one reality". (38) I am tempted to

think that the position of Shelley in this regard is pretty nearly the same as that of Plotinus. Matter is dead, inert 'dross' only in a relative and not in an absolute sense. As the ultimate (lowest) object in immanence and manifestation, it naturally is, comparatively speaking, an inert 'dross', but being nothing but an irradiation from the Divine, it neither is, nor can be, dead. It is unwilling to bear the Spirit's plastic stress (though it can not really resist it) because, being at the farthest remove from the Source of All Good, it is all but deprived of goodness. Yet, considered from the point of Idealistic Monism, matter is not dead and the "distinction of immateriality" is an unmeaning one. And whether we take Shelley to be an Immanentist or a Pantheist in his attitude towards the universe, he could, in neither case, have afforded to look upon matter as dead, inert 'dross' in a final sense.

(b) The material universe only a vision:- Shelley, agreeing with the subjective Idealists, considered the material universe, including our sense of time, to be only a projection of the mind. The world of 'becoming', which is a world of shadows ever in a state of flux and change, is only an illusory appearance. It is only the Eternal World beyond

Space, Time and phenomena, which is the Reality.

"... ... Sultan ! talk no more
 Of thee and me, the Future and the Past;
 But look on that which cannot change -
 the One,
 The unborn and the undying. Earth and
 ocean,
 Space, and the isles of life or light that
 gem
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
 This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,
 Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
 Against the boldest thoughts, repels them
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds - this Whole
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts,
 and flowers,
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings
 By which they have been, are, or cease
 to be,
 Is but a vision; - all that it inherits
 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and
 dreams;
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor
 less
 The Future and the Past are idle shadows
 Of thought's eternal flight - they have no
 being". (39)

In Fragments of an Unfinished Drama, written
 a few months before his death, Shelley conceived
 of the world only as a "woven imagery". He
 thought the material universe, including the
 phenomena of light, only to be a veil which hides
 the inner Reality. Shelley's imagery of light as
 a veil is again curiously similar to the image
 in the Upanishads (Ishopanishad, verse 15) where
 it is said that "Truth's face has been hidden by
 a disc of gold".

"... ... and around my sleep
 Have woven all the wondrous imagery
 Of this dim spot, which mortals call the
 world;
 "

And as a veil in which I walk through
Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves,
and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air".
(40)

In The Sensitive Plant too, Shelley speaks of

"... .. this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of a dream". (41)

(c) Evil :- In Note on Prometheus Unbound, Mary Shelley said:

"The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

'Brought death into the world and all
our woe'.

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all - even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good". (42)

Prometheus Unbound is a vindication of Shelley's theory that evil could be expelled

from the universe if man would expel it from his own nature. Demogorgon's final address in the play, however, makes it clear that as Time was endless, this victory over evil might not prove to be everlasting; it was possible that evil could creep in again at some stage in the endless process of Time. But the liberation of Prometheus and the regeneration of ^{the} entire nature once achieved show us the effective way to deal with evil, should it ever rear its head again at any time in endless futurity. Dealing with this topic, Peter Butter comments : "Shelley thought that men should not wait for any supernatural power to aid them, but actually set about improving themselves now; and that if they did so, evil, which is self-destructive, would be overthrown. The bringing in of Demogorgon shows Shelley's realisation that man cannot by himself expel evil from the universe; he is not himself the ultimate power, but if he wills to co-operate with it tremendous results may follow". (43) I am inclined to think that the second sentence in the above quotation very much whittles down Shelley's stand in Prometheus Unbound which the first sentence so aptly and adequately expresses. It is true that man is himself not the ultimate power, but in Prometheus Unbound, the hero does

not merely co-operate with Demogorgon in bringing about the overthrow of Jupiter. He is the initiator of the entire action of the play. By expelling evil from his own nature, he sets into motion forces which overthrow evil. It is man's responsibility not merely to co-operate in the overthrow of evil, but to bring about the fall of evil by reforming his own nature. Demogorgon has to wait till Prometheus has expelled evil from his own nature, but once Prometheus has done so, Demogorgon can wait no longer. It is in man's hand and also his responsibility to redeem himself and to set in motion forces which will redeem the entire Nature.

The defiant temper and triumphant tone against evil to be found in Prometheus Unbound was later considerably modified by Shelley. In Notes on Hellas he stated:

"Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our

present state that solution is un-
attainable by us, are propositions which
may be regarded as equally certain:
meanwhile, as it is the province of the
poet to attach himself to those ideas
which exalt and ennoble humanity, let
him be permitted to have conjectured
the condition of that futurity towards
which we are all impelled by an inex-
tinguishable thirst for immortality". (44)

And in his last work, The Triumph of Life,
the sense of gloom, if anything, is deeper still.

III - Man.

(a). The Soul :- The human soul is a ray of the
Great and Eternal Brightness (45) or it may be
considered to be a mirror of the Great Central
Fire (46). The souls descend into the world of
matter like raindrops from the cloud in accordance
with a mighty law (47). While on earth, the
soul is "imprisoned...in a body like a grave".(48)
The earthly touch for the soul is corrupting and
contaminating (Vide The Triumph of Life).

(b). The Subtle Body and the Aura :- Besides the
gross, physical body, human beings have a subtle,
psychic body. This subtle body becomes dis-
sociated from its physical counterpart during
sleep and trance and at death. We find a
description of this subtle vehicle in Queen Mab:

"Sudden arose
Ianthe's Soul; it stood
All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily frame.
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and
grace,

will surround him when he descends there after his death. Thus a man literally creates a heaven or a hell for himself after his death according to what his thoughts and desires have been like during the period of his physical-plane existence:

"... Thou art slow, my son;
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
 A throne for thee, round which thine
 empire lies
 Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects
 thou,
 Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of
 murdered life,
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee
 now -
 Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust,
 and die ! -
 Stripped of their mortal strength, as
 thou of thine". (53)

In Adonais in stanzas IX and X, Shelley speaks of "The quick Dreams, the passion-wingéd Ministers of thought" and endows these passion-winged forms of thought even with sentiency, but in the context of this poem we might consider these ideas to be poetic fancies. It is not possible, however, to dismiss the views expressed in Prometheus Unbound and in Hellas in the quotations given above as mere poetic fancies. They represent Shelley's seriously-held opinions, if not exactly his deepest convictions.

Shelley also speaks of the tremendous power of our thoughts. In Prince Athanase, we read that "The mind becomes that which it contemplates" (54) and Prometheus says that "Methinks

I grow like what I contemplate".(55).

(d) Pre-existence :- The most striking evidence of Shelley's pre-occupation with the idea of pre-existence is to be found in the Magdalen Bridge episode recounted by his friend T.J. Hogg in which Shelley questioned a mother who happened to be on this bridge with her few-weeks-old baby. The episode has been narrated in an exceedingly interesting manner by Hogg and is worth reading in full, but we have to be satisfied here with a short extract:

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he asked, in a piercing voice, and a wistful look. The mother made no answer, but perceiving that Shelley's object was not murderous, but altogether harmless, she dismissed her apprehension, and relaxed her hold.

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he repeated, with unabated earnestness.

"He cannot speak, Sir", said the mother seriously.

"Worse and worse", cried Shelley, with an air of deep disappointment, shaking his long hair most pathetically about his young face; "but surely the babe can speak if he will, for he is only a few weeks old. He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time; the thing is absolutely impossible". (56)

Amongst his own works, Shelley speaks of Prince Athanase having "memories of an ante-natal life" (57) and the following lines in "Queen Mab" also suggest the idea of pre-existence:

"For birth but wakes the spirit to the
sense
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced
shape
New modes of passion to its frame may
lend". (58)

(e) Death :- So long as we are living in an embodied state in the physical world we are surrounded by illusions. Death, which frees us from the muddy vesture of gross physical matter, clears our vision and destroys the phantoms of illusion. We are, therefore, nearer the Truth and have a better vision of Reality after death.

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured
glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments".
(59)

The idea that life is merely a painted veil and all that we see during life is a mimicry of "colours idly spread" is advanced on many an occasion by Shelley. In the two quotations given below, taken from two different poems composed with a fairly good interval of time in between them, not only is the idea repeated but most of the important words and expressions too are exactly the same:

"The painted veil by those who were,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly
All men believed or hoped..." (60)

"Lift not the painted veil which those
who live

IV - The Evolution of Life.

(a) Evolution of Life through Form:- Every particle in the universe reflects the Divine according to its capacity. The whole of Nature clothes the Supreme Beauty and is a mirror which flashes forth gleams from the central Light.

"That Light whose smile kindles the
Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and
move,
... .. that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly
wove
By man and beast and earth and air and
sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors
of
The fire for which all thirst...". (64)

This idea of Shelley comes very close to the view expressed in the Svetāsvatara-Upanishad:

"Beyond this (world), the Brahman beyond, the mighty one, in every creature hid according to its form, the one encircling lord of all - Him having known, immortal they become". (65)

Though each particle and each form in the universe is the tabernacle of the Spirit, Life is not static but a dynamic Force and there is a continuous upward surge of the Life-stream. Life is the essence of which the outward form is the manifestation and Nature is ever active improving the outward form in order to accommodate and express evolving life. It is always the Spirit, however, which is immanent in all forms - the forms may be looked upon as so many sprouts from

the root of the Spirit. The Sanskrit word "Brahman" too literally means "that which bursts forth". (68)

"... the one Spirit's plastic
stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world,
compelling there,
All new successions to the forms they
wear;
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks
its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may
bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light". (67)

Coursing upward, when the Life-stream reaches the human level, the purpose of evolution becomes more accentuated and the process gathers an additional momentum. It is the task of Life at the human level to find out "how soonest to accomplish the great end for which it hath its being"; to strive to achieve its spiritual goal in the quickest time:

"And it is permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
Clothed in its changeless purity, may
know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may
taste
That peace, which in the end all life
will share.
This is the meed of virtue...". (68)

"Every heart contains perfection's germ". (69).
For every one is assured

"... the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares
For every living soul". (70)

Though there is a "lofty destiny" finally

awaiting every one, yet the path of spiritual evolution is one of gradual progress resulting from aspiration and striving. The final destiny is assured and no one can miss it, but whether we reach the end of our journey soon or late, depends on how hard we struggle to overcome the hurdles in the path and how much of positive effort we put in to accomplish our purpose.

"Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy
course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
For birth and life and death, and that
strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with
infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined
goal". (71)

(b) Karma and Re-incarnation :- In a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, dated November 24, 1811, Shelley stated:

"I will say, then...that Nature itself was but a mass of organized animation. Perhaps the animative intellect of all this is in a constant rotation of change, perhaps a future state is no other than a different mode of terrestrial existence to which we have fitted ourselves in this mode. Is there any probability in this supposition? On this plan, congenial souls must meet, because, having fitted themselves for nearly the same mode of being, they cannot fail to be near each other. Free-will must give energy to this infinite mass of being, and thereby constitute Virtue". (72)

In the above extract, Shelley speaks about the probability of the "future state" being "no other than a different mode of terrestrial existence to which we have fitted ourselves in this mode". Evidently, this implies that our future condition is a result of our own actions. The Law of Karma necessarily implies free-will; otherwise, no responsibility can devolve upon man for his actions. Absolute determinism is not consistent with the Law of Karma. The "future state", however, has not been made clear by Shelley; though the ideas of "a different mode of terrestrial existence" and "congenial souls must meet" are suggestive of re-incarnation. In Hellas however, there is a more definite statement of the ideas of both Karma and re-incarnation. In the following passage it is explicitly stated that beings hurry to and fro "through birth's orient portal and death's dark chasm" and that in their new form they are bright or dim according to "the robes they last on Death's bare ribs had cast".

"Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
 From creation to decay,
 Like the bubbles on a river
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
 But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gathered around their chariots as they go;
 New shapes they still may weave,
 New gods, new laws receive,
 Bright or dim are they as the robes they
 last

On Death's bare ribs had cast". (73)

It is how one acts in the previous life which determines the brightness or the dimness - happiness or unhappiness, faculties and capacities etc. - of the new life.

In the poem, With a Guitar, To Jane, where Shelley is Ariel and Jane is Miranda, there is a clear allusion to the theory of re-birth:

"For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness; - for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own". (74)

The following lines too, found in Fragments
Connected with Epipsychidion, appear to contain
some faint reference to re-birth because cloud and
rain suggest a cyclic process.

" ... Alas ! what are we ? Clouds
Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,
Which rain into the bosom of the earth,
And rise again, and in our death and
 birth,
And through our restless life, take as
 from heaven
Hues which are not our own, but which are
 given,
And then withdrawn". (75)

V - Expansion of Consciousness and
Human Destiny.

In his essay On Life, Shelley wrote:

"Those who are subject to the state called reverie, feel as though their nature were dissolved into the surrounding

universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction! (76)

This expansion of consciousness or the at-one-ment between self and external nature is the essence of mystical experience. Shelley had such experiences in moments of deep absorption in love or music and when he was beholding the beauty and sublimity of majestic Nature. He very vividly describes, in a letter to T.L. Peacock, the feelings of ecstatic wonder bordering on trance when he was face to face with Mont Blanc during his Alpine tour:

"Mont Blanc was before us, but it was covered with cloud; its base, furrowed with dreadful gaps, was seen above. Pinnacles of snow intolerably bright, part of the chain connected with Mont Blanc, shone through the clouds at intervals on high. I never knew - I never imagined - what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of ecstatic wonder, not unallied to madness. And remember this was all one scene, it all pressed home to our regard and our imagination. Though it embraced a vast extent of space, the snowy pyramids which shot into the bright blue sky seemed to overhang our path; the ravine, clothed with gigantic pines, and black with its depth below, so deep that the very roaring of the untameable Arve, which rolled through it, could not be heard above - all was as much our own, as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others as now occupied our own. Nature was the poet, whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest". (77)

In moments of such expanded consciousness, Nature and the human mind become interpenetrated. Shelley's lines in The Euganean Hills quoted below excellently illustrate the Wordsworthian idea that the human mind and external nature are exquisitely fitted to one another and the "blended might" of the two can accomplish a new creation in which the two become harmoniously interfused:

"Noon descends around me now:
 'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
 When a soft and purple mist
 Like a vaporous amethyst,
 Or an air-dissolved star
 Mingling light and fragrance, far
 From the curved horizon's bound
 To the point of Heaven's profound,
 Fills the overflowing sky;
 And the plains that silent lie
 Underneath, the leaves unsodden
 Where the infant Frost has trodden
 With his morning-winged feet,
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
 And the red and golden vines,
 Piercing with their trellised lines
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
 The dun and bladed grass no less,
 Pointing from this hoary tower
 In the windless air; the flower
 Glimmering at my feet; the line
 Of the olive-sandelled Apennine
 In the south dimly islanded;
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread
 High between the clouds and sun;
 And of living things each one;
 And my spirit which so long
 Darkened this swift stream of song, -
Interpenetrated lie
 By the glory of the sky:
 Be it love, light, harmony,
 Odour, or the soul of all
 Which from Heaven like dew doth fall,
 Or the mind which feeds this verse
 Peopling the lone universe". (78)

Standing before the majestic Mont Blanc,

Shelley felt an enlargement of consciousness similar to that which takes place during sleep or after death when the barrier between the physical and the super-physical worlds vanishes altogether. One seems to have slipped out of the familiar, ^{material} environment into a "mightier world" of some thin and tenuous substance, more real and true, though less hard and solid, than the physical reality.

"... ... I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death ? or do I
 lie
In dream, and does the mightier world
 of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep
 to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales !
Far, far above, piercing the infinite
 sky,
Mont Blanc appears..." (79)

When this mood deepens and the vision becomes more piercing, the "entire universe of things" seems to be but a creation of the mind, to be flowing out of it, and having no reality and existence independent of it :

"The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its
 rapid waves,
Now dark - ~~now~~ glittering - ~~now~~ reflecting
 gloom -
Now lending splendour, where from secret
 springs
The source of human thought its tribute
 brings
Of waters..." (80)

Such moments in Shelley correspond to those

general pantheistic note in Adonais than the theory of personal survival).

SUB-SECTION III.

The Affinity Between Shelley's Mysticism and Neo-Platonism and Oriental Mysticism.

It will appear from the brief summary of the correspondences between Shelley's mysticism and Neo-Platonism as well as Oriental Mysticism given below, that in several details, Shelley comes even closer than Wordsworth and Coleridge to these schools of thought. The summary will be presented under the same headings as adopted for the discussion of mysticism in Shelley's poetry in the previous sub-section.

(a) God :- God is conceived of both as a Transcendent and Immanent Being. As a Transcendent Power, the Ultimate Essence dwells "apart in its tranquillity, remote, serene, inaccessible", beyond the gloom of Earth and the radiance of Heaven. As an Immanent Being, it bursts forth "in its beauty and its might from trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light". It is The One which remains for ever, the many are fleeting phantoms, vain delusions.

(b) The Universe :- The universe is an indivisible unity and every particle is alive and

sentient - every particle lives, thinks and feels like man. The minutest atom performs its appointed task and nothing happens by chance. Matter is not a solid, material substance, but a fluid and dynamic thing; the distinction of "immateriality" is an unmeaning one. The material universe is only a vision - a woven, wondrous imagery - it is but a painted veil which hides the face of Truth. Here, "nothing is but all things seem"; the Reality exists Yonder. Evil is not inherent in the constitution of the universe; man can redeem himself and the entire Nature by expelling evil from his own mind.

(c) Man :- Man is an embodied ray of the Great, Eternal Brightness. When the soul descends into the world of matter, it becomes imprisoned in the body which is like a tomb of the spirit. Man has a subtle body besides the gross physical one. Our thoughts and desires take forms which remain vivified long after our physical death and confront us when we become disembodied. Thus our thoughts and passions during life, literally create a Heaven or a Hell for us in

which we live for sometime after death. Our mind is a powerful instrument; our thoughts can transform our nature; we become what we think. Our souls have existed somewhere before our birth in this world and sometimes it is possible to have memories of ante-natal life. As life is merely a painted veil with colours idly spread all over it, only a dome of many-coloured glass, death means waking from phantoms and delusions into a world of Truth. Death cannot mean any diminution of the force of mind; it only brings us to a vaster and more expansive life.

(d) The Evolution of Life :-

Each particle in the universe reflects the Divine according to its capacity, and through each form, the Life-stream is ever on the upward surge. On reaching the human level, the evolutionary urge of Life takes on a new momentum. Every heart contains the germ of perfection and for every one an ultimate glorious destiny is assured. But man must assume responsibility for the moral consequences of his

actions. The Law of Karma operates unerringly and unceasingly in all human affairs. In all probability, man has to be born again and again till his spiritual evolution is completed. Conditions during a new life-time are determined by the nature of actions in the previous life.

(e) Expansion of Consciousness and Human Destiny:-

In moments of deep concentration and ecstasy, the barriers between the physical and the super-physical worlds vanish altogether and man experiences a great enlargement of consciousness. The external universe seems to him to be but a projection of his mind and his separate identity from Cosmic life is annihilated. His own self becomes conterminous with the universe and the universe in its turn becomes conterminous with his self. The two mix and mingle and become united into one life and one consciousness. Such moments of mystic vision and cosmic consciousness are rare, fitful and momentary during our physical, earthly experience. But there comes a moment in the career of the soul, when, having reached the goal of spiritual evolution, it is permanently united with the Divine Consciousness. The soul which had gone forth on a pilgrimage returns Home; the ray which

had emanated from the Source of All Light reverts to it. At this point, there takes place an everlasting at-one-ment between man and God.

There is a remarkable agreement of ideas between Shelley's mysticism on the one hand and Neo-Platonism and Oriental Mysticism on the other.

SUB-SECTION IV.

The Sources of Shelley's Mysticism.

Before starting the discussion on the sources of Shelley's mysticism, it is necessary to point out here, as we had done in the case of Coleridge, that the native soil for his mystical ideas is provided by the poet's own personality. The wells of Shelley's mystical inspiration spring deep down in his own heart and mind. Shelley was a poet - philosopher and not a philosopher as such, and, in his poetry, he was primarily concerned with his own experiences, intuitions and visions rather than with any particular school or schools of philosophy. When we look for sources, we should not hope to discover the main ingredient, but only the tingeing material. The study of sources is only an attempt to find out some pathways leading into the countries of a rich mind - to provide ourselves with magnets and compasses with the aid of which we want to

charter and explore a new, strange sea of thought. We should also remember the point made by Wordsworth in his Preface to The Excursion, that in his poetry, a poet does not attempt formally to expound a philosophic system, but provides materials with the help of which an informed and diligent reader can construct the system for himself. With these qualifying remarks, we will endeavour in this subsection to examine (1) Shelley's Relationship with Neo-Platonism and (2) Shelley's Oriental Studies in order to find some clues to the poet's thought.

I - Shelley's Relationship with Neo-Platonism.

It will, perhaps, be convenient to consider this topic under three headings, namely, (a) Shelley's temperamental affinity with Neo-Platonism; (b) Shelley's direct knowledge of Neo-Platonism and (c) Shelley's indirect contact with Neo-Platonism.

(a). Shelley's temperamental affinity with Neo-Platonism:- We have seen in our Introductory remarks in this chapter that Shelley's mind had a natural occult and mystical bent. Though Shelley had an acute intellect and was a very enthusiastic and profound student of Plato, yet the impregnation of occultism and mysticism into the conceptual dialectics of Plato by the Neo-Platonists could not but have had an added fascination for a mind like Shelley's. The imaginative symbolism and the tangled but colourful web of mythology to be found

in Neo-Platonism, lend themselves lavishly and elaborately for use in mystical poetry, and as such, the appeal of Neo-Platonism is greater than that of direct Platonism to a poet with a mystical mind. The advantages, for poetic purposes, that Neo-Platonism has over pure Platonism, have been beautifully analysed by Professor Notopoulos:

"In the expression of this philosophy Neo-Platonism makes considerable use of symbolism, abstraction, mysticism, and dialectic, which ever refine its content by an abstruse hierarchical ascent...Platonism is a dialectical advance from sensation to a comprehensive knowledge, never forsaking logical development until it reaches its highest flight; it subordinates emotion, mysticism, symbolism to reason...Neoplatonism... interpolates Gnostic, Hermetic, and Cabalistic ideas, symbols and emotions... Its central doctrine of emanation - the relation of the One and the Many through mystical integrations, daemons, spirits - and its development of Intellectual Beauty tend to make it appealing to philosophical poetry, the cosmic imagination, and pantheistic emotions, which love the twilight of mysticism, symbolism, and allegory. Though Neo-platonism may use Plato's basic concepts, yet by setting them in a different context of emotion and metaphysical imagination, it changes Platonism into a system of thought which appeals more to the poetical mind than strict Platonism itself".(83).

Thus Shelley's poetic and mystic mind found Neo-Platonism very congenial to itself and he leaned heavily towards it. Professor Notopoulos has made the following remarks about the natural affinity between Shelley's mind and Neo-Platonism:

"In Neo-Platonism Shelley found an atmosphere more congenial to his own nature. To what extent he was naturally predisposed to Neo-Platonism has been considered in the study of his natural Platonism, but here it need only be pointed out that in his cosmic emotions, pantheism, daemons, spirits, love for abstract symbolism, and allegory, Shelly leans more toward Neo-Platonism than Platonism. The Neo-Platonic influences which reached Shelly through Thomas Taylor and other authors affected by Neo-Platonism were more sympathetic to Shelley's temperament than was logical Platonism". (84).

(b). Shelley's direct knowledge of Neo-Platonism:-

We do not have any evidence of Shelley's reading of Plotinus or Proclus or any of the important Neo-Platonic philosophers in the reading-list maintained by Mary Shelley. Her list, however, does not cover the whole period of Shelley's reading career and is in no sense to be taken as a complete and exhaustive document. While it certainly furnishes positive evidence of Shelley's and her own reading, we are not justified in drawing negative conclusions from it.

N.I.White, who has published the entire list in his biography of Shelley, comments on it as follows:

"At the end of each year Mary drew up a list of books read by each during the year. For constant readers such a list is never complete, even when it is a summary of daily entries; and Mary's lists omit a few titles which the daily entries show were read at least in part. Moreover, after the first year in Italy Mary's daily reading entries, particularly for Shelley, became more and more desultory, and she failed to make her yearly summary for the years 1819, 1821, and 1822. Incomplete as they are, Mary Shelley's lists are a valuable aid to the understanding of Shelley's interests". (85).

Even though there is no clear evidence to show that Shelley knew ^{*The Neo-Platonic*} books in original, there is good evidence to the effect that he imbibed this philosophy through Thomas Taylor, that crusading English pagan of Shelley's times. Notopoulos claims that Shelley knew Thomas Taylor personally and was influenced by him in his vegetarianism and polytheism.(86). This seems to be very probable, because Shelley's friend T.L.Peacock was a close friend of Thomas Taylor. The intimacy between Peacock and Taylor was so deep that Peacock was nicknamed, on account of his Classical scholarship, as Greeky-Peaky by Taylor.(87). Mary Woolstonecraft, the mother of Mary Shelley, also knew Thomas Taylor personally and had resided with him along with a friend of hers for three months. (88). Shelley may have contracted Taylor's acquaintance for either or both of these reasons. As for Shelley's knowledge of Taylor's books, it is most probable that he saw them in Peacock's library.(89). Then again, T.J.Hogg, the closest friend and partner-in-studies of Shelley's early days, possessed Thomas Taylor's translations of Neo-Platonic authors. Notopoulos, in The Platonism of Shelley, states that "the writer is informed by Dr.W.E. Peck that once he had in his possession Hogg's copy of Thomas Taylor's Neo-platonic translations". (90). This is fairly definite evidence. Professor Carl Grabo also in

The Meaning of the Witch of Atlas states that "that he (Shelley) was familiar with some of the innumerable works of Thomas Taylor we learn from Hogg's account of his and Shelley's reading while at Oxford".(91). Coming to Shelley himself, we find him sending urgent orders for Taylor's translation of Pausanias in 1817. Writing to the publishers, C. and J. Ollier, on July 24, 1817, he says: "Be so good as to send me 'Tasso's Lament' a poem just published; and Taylors (sic) Translation of Pausanias. You will oblige me by sending them without delay, as I have immediate need for them".(92). The best proof, however, of Shelley's direct knowledge of Taylor's works is his own copy of Taylor's translation of Plato which has survived and is now in the Bodleian Library. Notopoulos, in his The Platonism of Shelley, makes a most significant entry on this point: "Of all his (Shelley's) copies of Plato, only his copy of Taylor's translation of The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato (London, 1793) has survived and is now in the Bodleian Library (see The Shelley Correspondence in the Bodleian Library, p.47)".(93). Now, it is only too well known to need any elaborate comment that Taylor never made any clear distinction between Plato's own philosophy and that of the successors in his school, and always interpreted Plato Neo-Platonically. Thus, even if it is discounted that

Shelley read any of the translations of Neo-Platonic philosophers by Thomas Taylor, for which, in fact, there is no clear justification, particularly in view of Dr. Peck's evidence (cited above) that Hogg possessed Taylor's Neo-Platonic translations, it is incontrovertible that he (Shelley) knew Neo-Platonism as presented by Taylor in his translations of Plato and his abundant introductions, commentaries and notes thereon.

Before we take up the next question, it may perhaps be worthwhile pointing out that Shelley must also have imbibed Neo-Platonic ideas almost at first-hand from both Ficino's and Dacier's translations of Plato. About Ficino's translations of Plato, Notopoulos states:

"The greatest service which the Platonic Academy (at Florence) rendered was Ficino's translation of the complete works of Plato. This translation, which Shelley used as an aid in reading and translating Plato, was to Europe of the succeeding centuries what Jowett's translation of Plato is to us. The translation of Ficino was accompanied by introductions to the various dialogues which often interpreted Plato Neo-platonically, allegorically and mystically".(94).

Dacier's introductions to the translations of Plato's works, as Butter remarks, "confound Platonic with neo-Platonic matter".(95). The English version of Dacier's translations of Plato was the first book that Hogg and Shelley read together at Oxford and they were so much thrilled by the Platonic doctrines that the reading of this book

was repeated several times. Hogg, in The Life of Shelley, describes his and Shelley's study of Dacier as follows:

"The English version of the French translation by Dacier of the Phaedo, and several other dialogues of Plato, was the first book we had, and this we read together several times very attentively at Oxford...Shelley was never weary of reading, or of listening to me whilst I read, passages from the dialogues contained in this (Dacier's) collection, and especially from the Phaedo, and he was vehemently excited by the exciting doctrines..."
(96).

Ficino and Dacier, who, in their introductions to and commentaries on Plato, deeply tinged him (Plato) with Neo-Platonism, were, in addition to Thomas Taylor, the other great carriers of Neo-Platonic ideas to Shelley.

(c). Shelley's indirect contact with Neo-Platonism:-

It is simply impossible to treat this topic, within the very limited space at our disposal here, in any but the most casual and concise manner because, on the one hand, Shelley was an exceedingly prolific reader, and on the other, Neo-Platonism has had fascination for and been a source of inspiration to a large number of thinkers and writers. We shall be making only very brief references to a few names just to suggest that Shelley had the opportunity, which he made use of, of learning about and imbibing Neo-Platonism from sources other than the relatively direct ones mentioned in the immediately foregoing paragraphs. We will classify the sources we are

dealing with under the present heading into three categories: (1) History Books and Critical Studies of Schools of Philosophies; (2) Authors other than English and (3) English Authors.

(1). History Books and Critical Studies of Schools of Philosophies:- In this group, first of all, come the books of Lord Monboddo, Of the Origin and Progress of Language and Antient Metaphysics, which Shelley read respectively in 1812 and 1820. Both these books are replete with Platonism and Neo-Platonism. The former book was one of the sources of the title of Shelley's poem Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. Shelley was reading Antient Metaphysics less than a year before he wrote his Adonais and his ideas in this poem were considerably coloured by the study of this book. Lord Monboddo says in Antient Metaphysics:

"The authors I have chiefly followed are Plato and Aristotle, together with the later philosophers of the Alexandrian School, such as Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichos, Ammonius Herameias, and his scholars, Simplicius and Johannes Philoponus, the two best commentators upon Aristotle; likewise Proclus, who was thought to understand the philosophy of Plato so well, that he was dignified with the title of his successor".(97).

Notopoulos, after noting that "the fact that Shelley had been reading Monboddo's treatise less than a year before the composition of Adonais increases the importance of this treatise in the account of Shelley's indirect Platonism", goes on to say:

"Monboddo is steeped in the later Platonic tradition...the macrocosm and microcosm are presented with Neoplatonic interpretations, many of which emanate from Cudworth. Thus we can see that Monboddo's treatises are important potential sources of Shelley's Platonism, Neoplatonism, and Theism".(98).

Next in this series comes Gibbon's The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Gibbon's "description of the Neoplatonists - Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry - is a masterful, though prejudiced, characterization of Neoplatonism...Scholars who probe through the Neoplatonic shadows of Shelley would do well to consider Gibbon's account of Julian's Platonism as a potential source".(99). Shelley's reading of Gibbon dated from 1815.

Academical Questions by the Right Honourable William Drummond was another potent source through which Neo-Platonism came to Shelley. Shelley read Academical Questions in 1812 and possibly also in 1819 when Drummond made a personal call on him. Shelley was so much impressed by Academical Questions that he wrote: "Perhaps the most clear and vigorous statement of the Intellectual system is to be found in Sir William Drummond's Academical Questions".(100).

(2). Authors other than English:- We shall consider here only five authors - Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus, Dante, Wieland and Goethe. Albertus Magnus in his works synthesised the entire range of the rich and varied Neo-Platonism of the Middle Ages.

Paracelsus did the same for Renaissance Platonism. Both of them emphasised and dwelt extensively on the occult theories and lore to be found in Neo-Platonic doctrines. Paracelsus largely adapted the Neo-Platonic occultism to medical, chemical and theological ideas and stressed the influence exercised by planets and occult spirits on man's soul and body. Such writers had very great fascination for Shelley who confessed to have "fondness for natural magic and ghosts" and who, therefore, "pored over the reveries of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus".(101).

Dante, more than any one else, helped Shelley to clothe the Platonic and Neo-Platonic conception of Ideal Beauty in the form of a woman and deeply inspired his philosophy of Love. The quest of the Divine in the form of a woman has been one of the predominating themes of European poetry and this is owing largely to Dante and his tradition. "In this respect Dante is the father of that aspect of Shelley's Platonism which looks upon woman as the intermediate spirit which links the two worlds... The reading and admiration of Dante by Shelley show that we must give an important place to Dante in the account of Shelley's Platonism".(102).

The influence upon Shelley exercised by the novels of Wieland cannot be over-estimated. The

peculiar circumstance in which Shelley read and took his lessons in Wieland's Agathon made a vivid and strong impression on him. Shelly^e had come to know the Boinville circle at Bracknell and was a frequent visitor and guest there. It was here that Agathon was studied with Mrs. Boinville's young and charming daughter, Cornelia Turner, acting as an instructress in Platonic Love. Hogg has left an unforgettable picture of the whole affair:

"Wieland's Agathon was the leading classic, the textbook, in that university; the work in which all who would graduate were to be examined, which it was necessary to master in order to obtain a degree, which all who ventured to contend for a prize must take up. Agathon was read, not in the original, for the German language was not cultivated or understood by the professors, but as Histoire d'Agathon, in the French translation of Citizen Pernay... This book was immediately put into the hands of a neophyte. Shelley devoured it eagerly; he was fascinated with it, indeed".(103).

Commenting on the Neo-Platonism that is found in Agathon, Professor Notopoulos remarks: "Shelley need not have read Plotinus or other Neo-Platonists; he could have absorbed the essence of Neoplatonism from such passages as...The doctrine of emanation in Plotinus, with its 'abyss of glory', the flight of the Lone to the Alone, is all here".(104). Wieland's other novels, Peregrinus Proteus and Aristippus, which also Shelley read, are equally rich mines of Neo-Platonism. In fact, the Neo-Platonic tinge in these

books is even deeper than in Agathon.

Goethe too, whom Shelley admired so much that he translated scenes from his Faust, brought to him Neo-Platonism and other allied doctrines. "Though Goethe had read the Symposium, Phaedrus, and the Apology, the Platonic elements in Faust are essentially Neoplatonic, like Faust's vision of the macrocosm, and the spirit lore, both of which, as Goethe himself observes, were based on Neoplatonism, Hermetism, mysticism, and Cabalism, out of which he built 'a world that looked strange enough' and therefore attractive to Shelley".(105).

(3). English Authors:- Amongst English authors, we are going to confine ourselves to a few of Shelley's contemporaries - Wordsworth, Coleridge and Peacock - though, it is obvious that even in a passing reference like this, at least Spenser and Milton should have been included from amongst the older writers. It is not necessary to discuss here the Neo-Platonism of either Wordsworth or Coleridge, because that has been done in the two previous chapters. Though Shelley never forgave Wordsworth as a man for his later conservatism, and called him "a beastly and pitiful wretch", (106)., he read and admired his poetry constantly. When Byron arrived in Switzerland fresh from the bitterness of having been abandoned by his wife and cast out

by English society... Shelley dosed him, as he later told Medwin, with 'Wordsworth physic even to nausea'."(107). Shelley repeatedly declared that no poet could be free from the influence of his contemporaries. He said: "One great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study...From this subjection the loftiest do not escape...If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated".(108). He said the same thing in the Preface to The Revolt of Islam. Shelley was certainly thinking of Wordsworth and Coleridge when he talked about the inevitability of the influence of one contemporary writer upon another. Mary Shelley in her Notes on Queen Mab says that Wordsworth and Coleridge comprised Shelley's favourite reading.(109).

Shelley paid a magnificent tribute to Coleridge as the most intellectual literary figure of his time. Writing to T.L.Peacock on July 17, 1816, he said: "Tell me of the political state of England - its literature, of which when I speak Coleridge is in my thoughts;- yourself, lastly your employments, your historical labours".(110). In his poetic Letter to Maria Gisborne too, he spoke flatteringly of Coleridge:

"You will see Coleridge - he who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure

"I might have been of use to him, and Southey could not; for I should have sympathized with his poetics, metaphysical reveries, and the very word metaphysics is an abomination to Southey, and Shelley would have felt that I understood him".(112).

Finally, we have to consider, in the present context, the Neo-Platonic influence that came to Shelley through the works of and his personal friendship with Peacock. . Shelley's Prince Athanase and Alastor owe deeply to Peacock's Rhododaphne which has been called the "flowering" of "Taylor's polytheism and Neoplatonic mythology". While concluding this section, I can do no better than to quote from Professor Notopoulos to show how the Platonism that came to Shelley through Peacock was very thickly tinged and leavened with Neo-Platonism:

"Because Peacock was a good classical scholar it need not be assumed that his Platonism was pure and direct. The Plato to whom Shelley was introduced by Peacock's poem was the Neoplatonically interpreted Plato of Thomas Taylor, who was a close

friend of Peacock and affectionately called him 'Greeky-Peaky'. His appearance in Melincourt as the learned mythologist who quotes Orphic Hymns, his advocacy of a return to classical polytheism, of which Rhododaphne is an example, his dislike of formal education, Greek accents, and other opinions which Peacock shared, are all an index of Thomas Taylor's influence on Peacock...To understand how much of this mixture is the Orphic Neoplatonism of Taylor and how it reached Shelley, one may compare Peacock's note to page 9, line 14, of the poem in (in the Halliford edition) with Thomas Taylor's preface to his translation of Pausanias, to which Peacock refers in the preface to Rhododaphne, and Shelley in a letter to his bookseller dated August 3, 1817. The sources of Rhododaphne cannot be understood without it. Its theological and mythological information and atmosphere emanate from the Neoplatonists whom Taylor considers the true interpreters of Plato. Taylor, who is classed by Coleridge among 'dreamers', is the glass through which both Peacock and Shelley saw Plato darkly. When it is realized how the natural Romantic temperament of both poets felt at home in the suggestive shadows of Taylor's pagan phantasms, it is understandable why so much of their Platonism is really Neoplatonic".(114).

II - Shelley's Oriental Studies.

The name of India, known to the world outside as the country of legends, fables and philosophy, seems to have exercised the imagination of Shelley. There are plentiful references to India and its scenery in Shelley's poetry. Let us take three instances, one each from the early, middle and late periods of Shelley's poetic career. In Alastor, the Poet dreams of the "veiled maid" in the vale of Cashmire. In Prometheus Unbound, the hero is chained to icy rocks in the Indian Caucasus and

Asia lives in a lovely vale of the same mountains.
After the release of Prometheus, the Earth asks her
torch-bearer to guide the party of Prometheus to
a temple

"... .. beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, the Maenad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers".(115).

It seems that this Indian temple beyond the
Indus and its tributary rivers was originally
dedicated to Shelley's Prometheus because, a little
after the lines quoted just above, referring to this
temple, the Earth says:

"It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus..."(116).

It is interesting to think that Shelley chose
India to be the abode of Prometheus, the Regenerator
of Mankind, on his union with Asia, who is the
"shadow of beauty unbeheld". And in Fragments of an
Unfinished Drama, one of the last poems written by
Shelley and published posthumously, the scene is
laid before "the Cavern of the Indian enchantress"
and the characters are "Indian Youth and Lady".

Shelley also seems to have become acquainted
with Hindu mythology quite early in life. In his
letter to T.J.Hogg, dated April 26, 1811, he speaks
of the Indian god "Brahmah"(117) and refers to him
again in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, dated
June 2, 1811.(118). In another letter to T.J.Hogg,

date June 21, 1811, he speaks of "the Indian Camdeo, the God of mystic love (119)". In Queen Mab, he refers to "Seeva, Buddh". (120).

There appear to be two main sources of Shelley's knowledge of Indian religion and mythology - the works of Southey and Sir William Jones. The works of the latter also brought Shelley in contact with some presiding ideas in Indian philosophy. Shelley called Southey's The Curse of Kehama "my most favourite poem(121)" and White notes that "Southey was his (Shelley's) favourite. He read Thalaba so constantly that he almost knew it by heart. The Curse of Kehama was even more a favourite with him; he went about declaiming it among his intimates(122)". The Curse of Kehama must have given to Shelley considerable information about the Hindu pantheon and religious rituals. It must also have made him sufficiently familiar with the Interpretations that that celebrated Orientalist, Sir William Jones, gave to Indian myths, because it is full of references to him. Southey acknowledged his debt to Sir William Jones in the Preface to The Curse of Kehama and in his notes to the poem at various places. In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, dated June 11, 1811, Shelley refers to the idea that the gods of the Indian pantheon are personifications of powers and qualities. He says: "Were it not for this

embodying quality of eccentric fancy we should be to this day without a God...Mars was personified as the god of war, Juno of policy, etc. But you have formed in your mind the Deity of virtue; this personification beautiful in Poetry, inadmissible in reasoning, in the true style of Hindoostanish devotion, you have adopted...(123)". Southey in his Introduction to The Curse of Kehama notes this tendency towards personification of abstract qualities in Indian mythology. The Curse of Kehama is full of descriptions of Indian religious customs and rituals, and in particular, Southey's powerful and vivid description of the procession of Jaga-Naut (in Canto XIV), seems to have made its impression on Shelley's mind. There is a clear reference to it in Queen Mab (Book VII, 11.34-36) and there is also a very close parallel between Southey's description of the progress of Jaga-Naut and Shelley's picture of the Chariot of Life in The Triumph of Life. In both, the frenzied votaries get crushed under the wheels of the chariot.

On December 24, 1812, Shelley wrote to his bookseller Clio Rickman for the works of Sir William Jones along with copies of Confucius and Pythagoras. (124). He had also written to another bookseller, Hookham, for Moor's Hindu Pantheon. (125). Shelley had already become familiar with some of the ideas of Sir William Jones through The Curse of Kehama. It is quite possible that he had also read his works

earlier. Dr. Peck in his Life of Shelley (Vol. I., pp. 24-25) suggests that very likely Shelley encountered the poetical works of Sir William Jones amongst the books of Dr. Lind, the Royal Physician at Windsor, while he was at Eton. Dr. Lind had travelled extensively in the East and had a fine collection of Eastern books and curios. (126). Dr. Lind's interest in India is further revealed by the fact that his (Edinburgh) M.D. thesis was on "the Fever of 1762 at Bengal". (127). Shelley was a great favourite of Dr. Lind and he has portrayed him as Zonaras in Prince Athanase. Even if Shelley had not read Sir William Jones's works from amongst the collection of Dr. Lind, it is very probable that he read his (Jones's) important philosophical poems in Volume XVIII of Chalmers's widely circulated collection of the Works of English Poets which appeared in 1810. It is quite certain, however, that Shelley came to know some of the ideas of Sir William Jones through The Curse of Kehama in 1811 and in 1812 obtained the works of Jones. His interest in the works of Sir William Jones/^{must} also have been stimulated by the fact that Jones was one of the Fellows of his own college at Oxford. (128).

Jones's works were amongst the best and most authoritative sources available in English in Shelley's time for a knowledge of Indian philosophy and mythology and he must have obtained a fairly

extensive general knowledge of the Oriental lore from them. A detailed discussion of the extent to which Shelly possibly imbibed from Jones's works deserves to be the subject-matter of an entirely independent study; here we may be satisfied with references to only three of Jones's poems, the Palace of Fortune, the Hymn to Narayana and the Hymn to Bhavani. The Palace of Fortune appears to have influenced Queen Mab and suggested several things to Shelley in this poem. Koeppel has studied this question (129) and has pointed out that in several significant deviations from Volney's Ruins of Empires - like Queen Mab's personality, her dazzling chariot, her knowledge of men's minds, her clear silver tones "unheard by all but gifted ears", and the imposing cloud-palace from the magnificent hall of which Ianthe glimpses the rolling globe far-off - Shelley appears to have derived his material from The Palace of Fortune. In the Hymn to Narayana, Sir William Jones developed the Hindu theme of the entire material universe being but an illusion or Māyā. The following lines from the Hymn to Narayana appear to be very close to Shelley's famous lines in Hellas where he talks about "This firmament pavilioned upon chaos, with all its cressets of immortal fire...is but a vision... all that it inherits are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams".

regarded as the two chief sources of Shelley's knowledge of Indian philosophy and mythology, he may also have gleaned a stray acquaintance with the Hindu pantheon from John Frank Newton's book, The Return to Nature; or, A defence of the Vegetable Regimen published in 1811. Newton was one of Shelley's close friends and also one of the chief inspirers of his enthusiasm for vegetarianism. Shelley refers to the above book in his Notes on Queen Mab. About this book of Newton, Carlos Baker in Shelley's Major Poetry notes:

"Newton, whose learning exceeded all bounds, professed to find authority for his vegetarian views in the 'most ancient Zodiac, which was that of Dendera'. The Dendera Zodiac is noteworthy in that it effects a combination of Zoroastrian, Brahminical, and Greek theology. Of these two hemispheres which compose it, the upper is that of Oromaze, the principle of good, and the lower that of Ahrimanes, the principle of evil. Associated with Oromaze are 'Uranus or Brahma the Creator, and Saturn or Veishnu the Preserver'; the Ahrimanic hemisphere contains the compartments of 'Jupiter or Seva the Destroyer, and of Apollo or Krishna the Restorer'." (132).

Two other books of Indian interest which considerably fascinated Shelley were The Missionary by Miss Owenson (Lady Morgan) and The Empire of the Nairs by Sir James Henry Lawrence. Shelley has several times mentioned in his letters the thrill that he felt on reading The Missionary. One of these references to The Missionary is quoted below. Writing to T.J.Hogg, in June 1811, he said:

"The only thing that has interested me, if I except your letters, has been one novel. It is Miss Owenson's 'Missionary', and Indian tale; will you read it? It is really a divine thing; Luxima, the Indian, is an angel. What a pity that we cannot incorporate these creations of fancy; the very thoughts of them thrill the soul! Since I have read this book, I have read no other".(133).

Carlos Baker detects the influence of The Missionary on Shelley's The Revolt of Islam. He says: "The structure of Canto XII, which describes the capture and execution of Laon and Cythna, ^{closely} follows the climactic moments at the end of Lady Morgan's novel, as Woodberry has shown in his notes to the poem".(134). Shelley's attitude towards love and marriage was very strongly influenced by The Empire of the Nairs. He wrote to Sir James Henry Lawrence, the author of the book:

"Your 'Empire of Nairs', which I read this spring, succeeded in making me a perfect convert to its doctrines. I then retained no doubts of the evils of marriage, - Mrs. Woolstonecraft reasons too well for that; but I had been dull enough not to perceive the greatest argument against it, until developed in the 'Nairs'." (135).

Shelley also appears to have been interested in Indian History. The list of books ordered from Clio Rickman in 1812 includes Robertson's Historical Disquisitions on India.(136). In 1821, he wrote to C.Ollier for Mill's India.(137). Mary Shelley states in her Note on Poems of 1817 that Shelley had read Arrian's Historia Indica.(138). White notes that during his Oxford days "Rather scorning

the languages in which they were written, he (Shelley) read 'with more than ordinary interest' Eastern travels and translations of marvellous tales of the East".(139). In 1818, Shelley with Mary visited the Indian Library in London and this must have been in quest of books of Oriental interest. (140).

An unpublished narrative poem, Zeinab and Kathema, written before 1811, shows how Shelley's imagination was very early occupied with painting Indian scenery and telling romantic stories against an Indian background. We read the following account of Zeinab and Kathema in Cameron's The Young Shelley:

"The narratives were four in number: Zeinab and Kathema, Henry and Louisa, The Voyage, and A Tale of Society as it is. Of these only the last has been published - and that incompletely - and for the others we have to rely on Dowden's comments. Zeinab and Kathema appears to be a kind of weak foreshadowing of The Revolt of Islam, in that it deals with the adventures of a pair of lovers (from Cashmire), who are separated by 'Christian guile' and, in the end, perish melodramatically; the poem emphasizes 'the vengeance of indiscriminating and pitiless laws'."(141).

While concluding this topic, it may be pointed out in passing that at least four of Shelley's close friends and associates - Thomas Charles Medwin, Edward John Trelawny, Edward Ellerker Williams and Jane Williams - had been in India and must have

brought to Shelley accounts of Indian life, customs and natural scenery. Medwin, who made mesmeric experiments on Shelley, claimed to have learned this art in India, and his Sketches in Hindoostan and other Poems, published in 1821 by the Olliers at Shelley's recommendation, dealt with Indian themes. And either as a result of his growing interest in India or on account of his desire to find a career there, Shelley himself wanted to go to India and seek employment under some Indian prince. He had approached Peacock who was working in the India Office for it. Peacock's disappointing reply at a time when Shelley appears to have been already downcast in spirits, thickened the gloom of his mind:

"You will have seen my 'Adonais', and perhaps my 'Hellas', and I think, whatever you may judge of the subject, the composition of the first poem will not wholly displease you. I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse, but I have not; and since you give no encouragement about India, I cannot hope to have.

(Note to the above by Peacock:- 'He had expressed a desire to be employed politically at the court of a native prince, and I had told him that such employment was restricted to the regular service of the East India Company'.)"(142).

It is sad to recall that Shelley's wish to visit India, a country in the life and thought of which he seems to have remained interested throughout, was not fulfilled. Our thoughts become still

more poignant when we note that this was a disappointment Shelley faced almost towards the end of his life.

SUB-SECTION V.

Concluding Remarks.

The foregoing account of Shelley's studies does not in any sense present an exhaustive picture of his reading interests. Shelley was one of the most literary of poets and the range of his studies was very wide indeed. As White remarks, "he read and studied assiduously, with extraordinary penetration and memory, and his range included seven languages - English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin and Greek".(143). Hogg has given the following account of Shelley's studiousness:

"No student ever read more assiduously. He was to be found, book in hand, at all hours, reading in season and out of season, at table, in bed, and especially during a walk; not only in the quiet country and in retired paths; not only at Oxford in the public walks and High Street, but in the crowded thoroughfares of London... I never beheld eyes that devoured the pages more voraciously than his: I am convinced that two-thirds of the period of day and night were often employed in reading. It is no exaggeration to affirm that out of the twenty-four hours he frequently read sixteen... Few were aware of the extent, and still fewer of the profundity of his reading".(144).

Hogg also tells us how Shelly spent a large share of his scanty income on books and that if all

his books were collected at one place, they would have constituted "an excellent collection of valuable books".

"A large share of his scanty income, amounting in the whole to a considerable sum during some fifteen years that he was constantly a purchaser, was always expended upon books; so that, wherever he happened to be, he was commonly in possession of a tolerable library, comprising several choice works. I used to think him extremely lucky in buying books, for he frequently picked up a rare and valuable author at a very moderate price; or, to do him justice, I should perhaps rather say, that he was active, observant, and intelligent in such purchases, as he was in all other matters....

He had a good library expecting his return in a cottage at Killarney; and at I know not how many other places in the British Isles, and in other states of Europe. I have many times thought, what an excellent collection of valuable books the poor poet would have owned, if all his different libraries, scattered about in distant localities, had been brought together under one roof, and in one large room. (145).

We may reinforce our impression of Shelley's studious habits formed from Hogg's descriptions by the following account given by Medwin. The second quotation, also from Medwin, speaks of the rapidity with which Shelley read and the strength of his memory.

"He was indeed ever engaged in composition or reading, scarcely allowing himself time for exercise or air; a book was his companion the first thing in the morning, the last thing at night. He told me he always read himself to sleep. Even when he walked on the Argine, his favourite winter walk, he read - sometimes through

the streets, and generally had a book on the table by his side at dinner, if his temperate meal could be called one... He arose fresh in the morning to his tasks; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it, and he could truly say that food and rest were not preferred to it. No part gave him uneasiness but the last, for then he grieved that the work was done. He was indeed an indefatigable Student. So little impression did that which contributes one of the main delights of ordinary mortals, make on him, that he sometimes asked, 'Mary, have I dined?' (146).

"He took in seven or eight lines at a glance, and his mind seized the sense with a velocity equal to the twinkling of an eye. Often would a single word enable him at once to comprehend the meaning of a sentence. His memory was prodigious". (147).

It is obvious that anybody who attempts to detect the influences of previous literature and thought upon the writings of such an omnivorous reader as Shelley must avoid dogmatism and speak with caution. Let us also remember what Shelley himself said about the susceptibility of imaginative men like himself to receive impressions from their studies. Writing to John and Maria Gisborne on July 13, 1821, Shelley said:

"I will only remind you of 'Faust'; my desire for the conclusion of which is only exceeded by my desire to welcome you. Do you observe any traces of him in the poem I send you? Poets - the best of them, are a very cameleonic race; they take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass". (148).

And yet, 'cameleonic' as poets are, we may once more state that a great poet like Shelley, in the ultimate analysis, is concerned in his poetry with expressing his own experiences, intuitions and visions and not with versifying any philosophic system, even though it might be as imposing and respectable a philosophic system as that of Plato himself. Shelley's poems are not a metrical version of the philosophy of either Berkeley, or Plato, or Plotinus, or any body else. His poems are the incarnations of his dreams and visions and apprehensions of Reality and Truth. But if we must light torches to illumine our paths into the countries of Shelley's mind, the effulgence that emanates from Neo-Platonism and Oriental Mysticism sheds brightness enough.

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CHAPTER VIII.Postscript.

In chapters IV to VII, the discussion in the course of each chapter has been concluded towards its end and it would be sheer redundancy to re-state the arguments or the findings and the hypotheses. In the Introduction (chapter I) we had set forth our main premises and the materials that have been presented in the subsequent chapters appear to justify the following main deductions:

- (a) that there are striking similarities of ideas between the philosophy of the English Romantic poets represented by Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley on the one hand and Oriental Mysticism on the other;
- (b) that though each of the three poets mentioned above, and more particularly Coleridge and Shelley, studied some books on Indian philosophy and Hindu mythology and most likely picked up some ideas concerning them from these direct sources, yet none of them was really an Orientalist or an Indologist and none of them made Oriental studies his principal or even an important intellectual pre-occupation;
- (c) that all these three poets were profoundly influenced by Neo-Platonism and their philosophy on many essential points comes very near to its doctrines;

(d) that Neo-Platonism, which was an eclectic and syncretistic philosophical movement, has many ideas in common with Oriental Mysticism; and

(e) that, apart from the idealist bent of mind personal to each of the three poets mentioned above, it was this contact with Neo-Platonism which, in the main, accounts for the similarities of ideas between the philosophy to be found in their poetry and the tenets of Oriental Mysticism.

Before we proceed further, it is essential to make clear that the word "Traces" in the title of the thesis has been used to indicate the general ideological agreement between Oriental Mysticism and the philosophy in English Romantic poetry without any commitment on our part of the historical influence of the one upon the other. As stated in the conclusion of chapter IV of this work, the present stage of our knowledge on the subject does not warrant us to assert any definite and substantial historical link between Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism. Moreover, the task of ascertaining historical links, if any, between Oriental Mysticism and Neo-Platonism has to be tackled by scholars of Comparative Philosophy and need not be considered as a problem of literary criticism. Be it as it may, we are only positing here that many of the basic ideas of English Romantic poetry can be found in ancient Oriental philosophy without advancing any

theory of historical relationship between the two.

The Romantic poets were Idealists. Idealism, in spite of all that can be said in favour of Empiricism and Pragmatism, is the salt of Philosophy and adds more meaning and lustre to our life. The poets we have dealt with were not fanciful visionaries, but men of Imagination, Imagination which as Wordsworth said,

"Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind
And reason in her most exalted mood".(1)

Mankind will always need such men of "clearest insight, amplitude of mind". They bring to us

"Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, substing at the heart
Of endless agitation".(2).

Truth can be approached from many sides. There are many paths to the hill of the Lord. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna said:

"However men approach Me, even so do I
welcome them, for the path men take from
every side is mine, O Partha".(3).

There are, thus, many ways of apprehending Reality. Science to-day is splitting atoms of matter into energy and we are on the verge of a scientific Monism. The mystics and the poets also in their most exalted mood saw long ago that

"Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit".(4).

They, therefore, found that the distinction of

immateriality is an unmeaning one.

When the burthen of the mystery is lightened and we see into the heart of things, then Truth beams on us like the flashing of a shield. In this apocalyptic vision two cardinal facts are revealed: (1) The world of phenomena is an unsubstantial fleeting show. But behind all this flux and change exists The One, the Indestructible, the Unchangeable:

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's
 shadows fly".(5).

One who sees the Eternal behind the ephemeral, vanishing shadows, has seen the Truth. In the Bhagavad-Gita also the same idea is put forth:

"Seated equally in all beings, the Supreme Lord, unperishing within the perishing - he who this seeth, he seeth".(6).

(2) The manifested universe, though fleeting and shadowy, is nothing but an irradiation from the Supreme who is immanent in every particle of it. It is the smile of the One which kindles the whole universe. The minutest atom is divine, living, and sentient, and from a spiritual point of view everything is important in the Divine Universal Scheme. The same Light shines through the mightiest of stars and the meanest of glow-worms and the least of things is the signpost of the same Reality:

"The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their
beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their
brightness)

We are living to-day in a world which is rapidly contracting and a universe which appears to be endlessly expanding. The new age confronts us with tremendous problems, but the mysticism of the Romantic poets provides us with an adequately dynamic philosophy to meet the challenge of the epoch that is dawning upon us. In order to face the future with courage and hope, it is necessary to have a living faith in the vision that "Heaven's Light forever shines".

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APPENDIX A.Showing the Agreement between Ideas in
Oriental Mysticism and the System of Plotinus.

(The following material is an extract from the Preface to Select Works of Plotinus translated by Thomas Taylor, Edited with Preface by G.R.S. Mead, - Bohn's Philosophical Library, London, 1895).

Note:- The page numbers given in the margin refer to page numbers in the Preface in the above book.

P.xiv. "Since Neoplatonism originated in Alexandria, where Oriental modes of worship were accessible to everyone, and since the Jewish philosophy had also taken its place in the literary circles of Alexandria, we may safely assume that even the earliest of the Neoplatonists possessed an acquaintance with Judaism and Christianity. But if we search Plotinus for evidence of any actual influence of Jewish and Christian phraseology, we search in vain; and the existence of any such influence is all the more unlikely because it is only the later Neoplatonism that offers striking and deep-rooted parallels to Philo and the Gnostics". (Quotation from Harnack).

P.xvi. And though Plotinus cannot be said to have borrowed directly either from Christianity or other oriental ideas, nevertheless it is beyond doubt that he was acquainted with them, and that too most intimately. By birth he was an Egyptian of Lycopolis (Sivouth); for eleven

P.xvii. years he attended the school of Ammonius at Alexandria; his interest in the systems of the farther East was so great, that he joined the expedition of Gordian in order to learn the religio-philosophy of the Persians and Indians; his pupils Amelius and Porphyry were filled with oriental teaching, and it was in answer to their questioning that Plotinus wrote the most powerful books of the "Enneads". Porphyry, moreover, wrote a long treatise of a very learned nature "Against the Christians", so that it cannot have been that the master should have been unacquainted with the view of the pupil. Numenius again was highly esteemed by Plotinus and his school, and this Pythagoneo-Platonic

philosopher was saturated with oriental ideas, as Vacherot tells us (i. 318):

"Numenius, a Syrian by origin, and living in the Orient, is not less deeply versed in the religious tradition of Syria, Judaea, and Persia, than in the philosophical doctrines of Greece. He is perfectly familiar with the works of Philo, and his admiration goes so far as to ask whether it is Philo who platonizes, or Plato who philonizes; he dubs Plato the Attic Moses. If the doctrines of Philo have at all influenced the philosophy of Greece, it is owing to Numenius, the father of this Syrian School out of which Amelius and Porphyry came into Neoplatonism".

"The oriental tendency of the philosopher is shown by the following words of Eusebius :

'It must be that he who treats of the Good, and who has affirmed his doctrine with the witness of Plato, should go even further back and take hold of the doctrines of Pythagoras. It must be that he should appeal to the most renowned of the nations, and that he should present the rituals, dogmas and institutions which - originally established by the Brahmans, Jews, Magians, and Egyptians - are in agreement with the doctrines of Plato' ". (viii. vii., "De Bono").

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We, therefore, find in Plotinus two marked characteristics: the method of stern dialectic on the one hand, and a rational and practical mysticism on the other that reminds us very strongly of the best phase of the yoga-systems of ancient India.

The part of the system of our great Neoplatonist that has been and will be the least understood, is that connected with the practice of theology, which consummates itself in ecstasy, the Samadhi of the yoga-art of Indian mystics. For years Plotinus kept secret the teachings of his Master Ammonius Saccas, and not till his fellow-pupils Herennius and Origen (not the Church father) broke the compact, did he begin to expound the tenets publicly. It is curious to notice that, though this ecstasy was the consummation of the whole system, nowhere does Plotinus enter into any details of the methods by which this supreme state of consciousness is to be reached, and I cannot but think that he kept still silence deliberately on this all-important point.

Ammonius, the master, made such an impression on his times by his great wisdom and knowledge that he was known as the "god-taught"; he was more than a mere eclectic, he himself attained to spiritual insight. The pupil Plotinus also shows all the signs of a student of eastern Raja Yoga, the "kingly art" of the Science of the soul. In his attitude to the astrologers, magicians and phenomena-mongers of the time, he shows a thorough contempt for such magic arts, though, if we are to believe Porphyry, his own spiritual power was great. The gods and daemons and powers were to be commanded and not obeyed. "Those gods of yours must come to me, not I to them". (Porphyry, X).

And, indeed, he ended his life in the way that Yogins in the East are said to pass out of the body. When the hour of death approaches they perform Tapas, or in other words enter into a deep state of contemplation. This was evidently the mode of leaving the world followed by our philosopher, for his last words were: "Now I seek to lead back the self within me to the All-self". (Porphyry, ii).

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The System of Plotinus.

The whole system of Plotinus revolves round the idea of a threefold principle, trichotomy or trinity, and of pure intuition. In these respects, it bears a remarkable similarity to the great Vedantic system of Indian philosophy. Deity, spirit, soul, body, macrocosmic and microcosmic, and the essential identity of the divine in man with the divine in the universe, or of the Jivâtman with the Parmâtman - are the main subjects of his system.

Thus from the point of view of the great universe we have the One Reality, or the Real, the One, the Good; this is the All-self of the Upanishads, Brahman or Paramâtman.

Plotinus bestows much labour on the problem of the Absolute, and reaches the only conclusion possible, viz., that it is inexpressible; or, in the words of the Upanishads, "the mind falls back from it, unable to reach it". It must, nevertheless, produce everything of itself, without suffering any diminution or becoming weaker (vi. viii. 19): essences must flow from it, and yet it experiences no change; it is immanent in all

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existences (iv. iii. 17; vi. xi. 1) - "the self hidden in the heart of all", says the Upanishads; it is the Absolute as result, for as absolutely perfect it must be the goal, not the operating cause of all being (vi. ix. 8,9), as says Brandis; and Harnack dubs the system of Plotinus "dynamic pantheism", whatever that may mean. But we are in the region of paradox and inexpressibility, and so had better hasten on to the first stage of emanation.

First, then, there arises (how, Plotinus does not say, for that question no man^{can} solve; the primal ways of the One are known to the Omniscient alone) the Universal Mind, or ideal Universe; the Ishvara or Lord of the Vedantins. It is by the thought of the Universal Mind that the World-Soul is brought into being. As Tennemann says (Section 207):

"Inasmuch as Intelligence (Universal Mind) contemplates in Unity that which is possible, the latter acquires the character of something determined and limited; and so becomes the Actual and Real. Consequently, Intelligence is the primal reality, the base of all the rest, and inseparably united to real Being. (This resembles the Sach-Chid-Anandam of the Vedantins, or Being, Thought, Bliss). The object contemplated and the thinking subject, are identical; and that which Intelligence thinks, it at the same time creates. By always thinking, and always in the same manner, yet continually with new difference, it produces all things (the logos idea); it is the essence of all imperishable essences ('the base of all the worlds' of the Upanishads; 'on it all worlds rest'); the sum total of infinite life".

P.xxii.

We thence pass on to the World-Soul, the Hiranyagarbha (resplendent germ or shining sphere or envelope) of the Upanishads.

"The image and product of the motionless nous is the soul, which, according to Plotinus, is like the nous immaterial. Its relation to the nous is the same as that of the nous to the One. It stands between the nous and the phenomenal world, is permeated and illuminated by the former, but is also in contact with the latter. The nous is indivisible (the root of monadic individuality; the Sattva of the Buddhist theory of Ekotibhava as applied to man); the soul may preserve its unity

and remain in the nous, but at the same time it has the power of uniting with the corporeal world, and thus being disintegrated. It therefore occupies an intermediate position. As a single soul (world-soul) it belongs in essence and destination to the intelligible world; but it also contains innumerable individual souls, and these can either submit to be ruled by the nous, or turn aside to the sensual, and lose themselves in the finite". (Harnack).

This is precisely the same idea as that of the Hiranyagarbha, the individual souls arising by a process of differentiation (Panchikarana, or quintuplication of the primary "elements") from it. Its nature and function are thus summarized by Tennemann (Sections 208, 209) from En. v.i. 6,7, and vi. 4; vi. ii. 22; and iii. viii:

P.xxiii. "The Soul (i.e. the Soul of the World) is the offspring of Intelligence, and the thought of Intelligence, being itself also productive and creative. It is therefore Intelligence, but with a more obscure vision and less perfect knowledge; inasmuch as it does not itself directly contemplate objects, but through the medium of intelligence; being endowed with an energetic force which carries its perceptions beyond itself. It is not an original but reflected light, the principle of action and of external Nature. Its proper activity consists in contemplation; and in the production of objects by means of this contemplation. In this manner it produces, in its turn, different classes of souls, and among others the human; the faculties of which have a tendency to elevation or debasement. The energy of the lowest order, creative and connected with matter, is Nature.

"Nature is a contemplative and creative energy which gives form to matter; for form and thought are one and the same. All that takes place in the world around us is the work of contemplation".

P.xxiv. So much for the macrocosmic side. The micro-cosmic is necessarily to a large extent interblended with the above, and also views man by means of a trichotomy into spirit, soul and body; by which prism the rays of the primal unity are deflected. This again is precisely the same division as that of the Vedântins : viz., Karanopâdhi, the causal vesture, or spiritual veil or impediment of the Self; Sūkshmapâdhi,

P.xxv.

the subtle vesture, or psychic veil or impediment of the Self; and Sthûlopâdhi, the gross vesture, or physical body. The remarkable agreement between the view of Plotinus as to the three spheres of existence, or states of consciousness, or hypostases of being, in man and the Universe, the one being but a reflection of the other, and that of Shankaracharya, the great master of the Advaita Vedantin school of ancient India, may be seen from the following brilliant resume from the point of view of a mystic. It is based on the Tattvabodha, or Awakening to Reality, one of the most remarkable of Shankara's small treatises, so far unfortunately not translated into any European language, and is taken from the work of a mystic, entitled "The Dream of Ravan" (a reprint from "The Dublin University Magazine of 1853, 1854; London, 1895, pp.211-215).

"Man is represented as a prismatic trinity, veiling and looked through a primordial unity of light - gross outward body (Sthûlopâdhi); subtle internal body or soul (Sûkshmapâdhi); a being neither body nor soul, but absolute self-forgetfulness, called the cause-body (Kâropâdhi), because it is the original sin of ignorance of his true nature which precipitates him from the spirit into the life - condition. These three bodies, existing in the waking, dreaming, sleeping states, are all known, witnessed, and watched by the spirit which standeth behind and apart from them, in the unwinking vigilance of ecstasy, or spirit-waking".

The writer then goes on to speak of four spheres, but the "innermost" is in reality no sphere, but the state of simplicity or oneness. This is the state of ecstasy of Plotinus.

P.xxvi.

"There are four spheres of existence, one enfolding the other - the inmost sphere of Turiya, in which the individualized spirit lives the ecstatic life; the sphere of transition, or Lethe, in which the spirit, plunged in the ocean of Ajñâna, or total unconsciousness and utterly forgetting its real self, undergoes a change of gnostic tendency (polarity?); and from not knowing at all, or absolute unconsciousness, emerges on the hither side of that Lethean boundary to a false or reversed knowledge of things (viparîta jñâna), under the influence of an illusive Prâjñâ, or belief in, and tendency to, knowledge outward from itself, in which

delusion it thoroughly believes, and now endeavours to realize; whereas the true knowledge which it had in the state of Turiya, or the ecstatic life, was all within itself, in which it intuitively knew and experienced all things. And from the sphere of Prājñā, or out-knowing, - this struggle to reach and recover outside itself all that it once possessed within itself, and lost, - to regain for the lost intuition an objective perception through the senses and understanding, - in which the spirit became an intelligence, - it merges into the third sphere, which is the sphere of dreams, where it believes in a universe of light and shade, and where all existence is in the way of Ābhāsa, or phantasm. There it imagines itself into the Linga-deha (Psyche), or subtle, semi-material, ethereal soul...

"From this subtle personification and phantasmal sphere, in due time, it progresses into the fourth or outermost sphere, where matter and sense are triumphant; where the universe is believed a solid, reality; where all things exist in the mode of Ākāra, or substantial form; and where that which successively forgot itself from spirit into absolute unconsciousness, and awoke on this side of that boundary of oblivion into an intelligence struggling outward, and from this outward struggling intelligence imagined itself into a conscious, feeling, breathing nervous soul, prepared for further clothing, now out-realizes itself from soul into a body...

P.xxvii. "The first or spiritual state was ecstasy; from ecstasy it forgot itself into deep sleep; from profound sleep it awoke out of unconsciousness but still within itself, into the internal world of dreams; from dreaming it passed finally into the thoroughly waking state, and the outer world of sense".

These ideas will help us exceedingly in studying our philosopher and in trying to understand what he meant by ecstasy, and why there are three divisions in the morals of Plotinus, and how the metempsychosis in which he believed was neither for him the caressing of a dream nor the actualizing of a metaphor... ..

P.xxxiii. This is put very clumsily by Tennemann, and with a far from careful selection of terms, but the idea is clear enough for the student of mysticism, especially that of the East. Meditation

is a means whereby the soul is prepared to receive "flashes" of the Supreme wisdom. It is not the gaining of something new, but the regaining of what has been lost, and above all the realization of the ever-present Deity. This is precisely the same view as that enshrined in the great logion of the Upanishads, "That art thou". The divine in man is the divine in the Universe, nay, is in reality the Divinity in all its fulness. We have to realize the truth by getting rid of the ignorance which hides it from us. It is here that the doctrines of reminiscence and ecstasy come in. These are admirably set forth by Jules Simon (i. 549):

"Reminiscence is a natural consequence of the dogma of a past life. The Nous (the spirit or root of individuality) has had no beginning; the man (of the present life) has had a beginning; the present life is therefore a new situation for the spirit; it has lived elsewhere and under different conditions".

P.xxxiv. It has lived in higher realms, and therefore "it conceives for the world of intelligible a powerful love which no longer allows it to turn away its thought. The love is rather a part than a consequence of reminiscence". But ecstasy is the consummation of reminiscence. "Ecstasy is not a faculty properly so called, it is a state of the soul, which transforms it in such a way that it then perceives what was previously hidden from it. The state will not be permanent until our union with God is irrevocable; here, in earth life, ecstasy is but a flash. It is a brief respite bestowed by the favour of Deity. (Such flashes are resting-places on our long journey). Man can cease to become man and become God; but man cannot be God and man at the same time".

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APPENDIX - B.

A list of books in the library of William Wordsworth selected out of the List of his books sold at Rydal Mount in 1859. The Rydal Mount sale List was published in Transactions of Wordsworth Society, Vol.VI. The numbers on the left hand side of the names of the books are those to be found in the Rydal Mount Sale List and refer to the lots in which the books were auctioned.

Lot No.

29. Gibbon, Edward. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 12 Vols. (1788).
38. Haydn, Joseph. Dictionary of Dates and Universal Reference, relating to all Ages and Nations. 1844.
39. Herbert, Thomas Esqr.: Description of the Persian Monarchy now being the Orientall Indyes - a relation of some years Travaille begunne Anno 1626 folio, calf, 1634. (Very Scarce). ✓
41. Herodotus; Egyptian and Grecian History, translated from the Greek by Isaac Littlebury, 2 Vols. 1737.
56. Ockley, Simon, B.D. - History of the Saracens, etc. 2 vols. 1757.
60. Polybius (B.C. 203); The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan; translated into English by Edward Grimston, 1634. (8 Vols.).
61. Potter, John D.D. : Archaeologia Graeca. (1808).
67. Romanae Historiae. Oxford 1623. The Naturall and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies. 2 Vols.
77. Thevet, Andrew; The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans compared together by that grave and learned Philosopher and Historiographer Plutarch. Cambridge, 1676.
79. Thirlwall, Rev. Connop: History of Greece (8 Vols.).

83. Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time to the present, Vols. I to XI. 1799.
84. Montague, Lady M.W. - Letters during her travels in Europe, Africa and Asia. 3 Vols. 1769.
97. Carne, John: Letters from the East. 1826.
101. Cluverii, Philippi: Introductionis in Universam Geographiam cui access. Amsterdam 1661.
104. Cooke, Capt. : Two first voyages round the World. 1809. (4 Vols.).
107. Demosthenes: Leyland's Orationes of, 2 Vols. 1777.
108. Des Cartes, Principia Philosophiae. 1683.
109. Dictionnaire Biographique et Historique des Hommes Marquants de la fin du Dix - Huitieme siècle. 3 tomes. Londres 1800.
110. Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum, au. Car. Stephano. Geneve.
111. Diogenis Laertii de Vitis, Dogmatis et Apophthegmatis clarorum Philosophorum Libri X. 1616.
115. Du Bois, l'Abbe, (Missionary in Mysore); Description of the Character, Manners and Customs of the People of India, and their institutions, Religious and Civil. 1817.
128. Heylyn, P. etc. etc. Cosmography.
129. Hill, John, M.D. The Religion of Nature delineated. 1724.
139. Havor, Rev.W.: Collection of voyages, Travels and Discoveries, from the time of Columbus to the present. 24 Vols. - 1796. With engravings and Illustrations.
140. Knight, T.S., M.D. - Observations of Derangement of the Mind. 1827.
141. Cluverii, P. : Geographiae. 1674.
147. Pausanias - Description of Greece; with notes etc., by Thomas Taylor, 3 Vols. 1794.
149. Puffendorffii Officii Hominis et Civis juxta Naturales (Johnson), 1737. Quintillian, Système de la Nature, par M.Mirabaud, 2 tomes, Londres 1781.

159. Shelvocke, George: A Voyage Round the World by way of the Great South Sea, in 1719 to 1722. (1726)...Bushequius' travels into Turkey, 1744. Psalmanazar's Description of Formosa, an Island subject to the Emperor of Japan, 1704.
160. Strabonis Rerum Geographicarum Libri XVII.
166. Townsend, Rev. C.H., M.A. - Facts in Mesmerism, 1840. Letters on Mesmerism, by Harriet Martineau, 1845. Considerations on Phrenology, by the Rev.J.J.Hodgson, M.A., 1839.
170. Vocabulary of Sea Phrases. etc. 1799; Howell's Instructions for Forren Travels, 1650; Comenius' Visible World, 1777. Tooke's Pantheon, 1721.
172. Voyages and Travels: 6 Vols. Engraved Illustrations 1744.
174. Travels in Africa, by Mungo Park, 1816. Journal of a Residence and Travels in Calcutta by Capt., C.S.Cochrane. - Vol.2. (1770?).
175. West, Thomas: Antiquities of Furness, with Illustrations. 1805.
183. Wyche, Sir Peter (Knight): Life of Don John de Castro, the fourth Viceroy of India; written in Portuguese, now translated into English. London, 1664.
192. Behmen (Bohme) Jacob: De Signatura Rerum; on the Signature of All Things, showing the size and signification of the several forms and shapes in the creation, and what the beginning, ruin, and cure of everything is; it proceeds out of Eternity into Time, and again out of Time into Eternity, and compriseth all Mysteries, - (Written in High Dutch, 1622, Translated by J.Ellistone, 1651. Extremely rare.
193. Behman (Bohme) Jacob: - Theosophick Philosophy unfolded, by Edward Taylor, with Life, etc., of "that divinely-instructed Author", 1691.
194. Bell, Sir Charles: The Hand, its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as evincing Design, 1833. ...Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology, by the Rev.Whewell. 1833.

202. Burnet, Thomas: A Treatise concerning the State of Deported Souls before, and at, and after the Resurrection, written in Latin, and translated by Mr. Dennis. - 1633....Jeremy Taylor's Discourse of the Liberty of Propheying, 1702; John Wilkins' (Bishop of Chester) Discourse on the gift of Prayer, 1690...Cheyne's Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed, 1753.
203. Burnet, Thomas: The Theory of the Earth - of its Original - of the changes it hath already undergone - or is to undergo till the consummation of All Things. 1753.
206. Cave, William, D.D. - Apostolici, or the Lives, Acts, Deaths and Martyrdoms of those who were contemporary with, or immediately succeeded the Apostles etc.,etc., 1716.
210. Chamberlayne, Edw. F.R.S. : The Religious Philosopher, 3 Vols. 1719...Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion, by George Cheyne, M.D., 1705.
213. Clarke, Samuel, M.A. : Letter to Mr. Dodwell on the Immortality of the Soul. 1708.
220. Cudworth, R., D.D. : The True Intellectual System of the Universe. 1678.
221. Digby, Kenelm: Two Treatises, in one of which the Nature of Bodies, in the other the Nature of Man's Soule, is looked into, in the way of discovery of the Immortality of Reasonable Soules - 1665....A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man, with the several Iniquities and Corruptions thereto belonging, by Edward Reynolds, 1647.
222. Discourses of all the Religious Orders which have been in the World unto this Day, etc.,etc. (big book 1234 pages, some pages torn. No date).
227. Enthusiasm; Physical Theory of Another Life, 1836.
229. Faber, F.W., M.A.: Colloquies on Religion and Religious Education, 1837...Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches and among Foreign Peoples, by the same, 1842...Researches, Antidiluvian, Patriarchal, and Historical, concerning the way in which Men first acquired their knowledge of God and Religion, etc.,etc., by Thomas Clarkson, M.A., 1836.

230. Faber, George Stanley, B.D. : The Origin of Pagan Idolatry ascertained from Testimony and Circumstantial Evidence, 3 Vols. 1816.
233. Foster, James, D.D. - Discourses on all the Principal Branches of Natural Religion and Social Virtue. 2 Vols. 1749.
237. Godwyn, Thomas, B.D. : Moses and Aaron, or the Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites used by the Ancient Hebrews; observed and at large opened for the clearing of many Obscure Texts throughout the whole Scripture, etc.; herein likewise is showed what Customs the Heathen people etc. London 1634...Romanae Historiae Anthologia; an English Exposition of the Roman Antiquities. Oxford 1642 (two works held in high estimation, and extensively used as Text-Books for very many years); Archaeologiae Atticae, or Seven Books of the Attic Antiquities, etc., by Francis Rous, Scholler of Merton College in Oxon, Oxford 1649 - The three books bound in one.
239. Gordon, John (Surgeon); The Great Physician - the connection of Diseases and Remedies with the Truths of Revelation, 1843...The Philosophy of Health, or Exposition of the Physical and Mental Constitution of Man, by Dr. Southwood Smith, 2 Vols. 1836.
241. Hale, Sir Matthew, Knight (Lord Chief-Justice, etc.): The Primitive Origination of Mankind, considered and Examined according to the Light of Nature, 1677.
269. Moore, George, M.D. - The power of the Soul over the Body considered in relation to Health and Morals, 1845...The Immaterial System of Man contemplated in accordance with the Beautiful and the Sublime by Eliza Hope, 2 Vols. 1835.
271. Mornay, Philip de (Lord of Plessis and Mornay): A work concerning the Truenesse of the Christian Religion, against Atheists, Epicures, Paynims, Jewes, Mahumatists, and other Infidels; begun to be translated into English by that Honourable Knight and Worthy Gentleman, Sir Philip Sidney Knight, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding,. 1617.
273. Nichol, J.P. - The architecture of the Heavens, with numerous engraved Illustrations. 1850.

284. Molinos' Guide Spirituelle. 1688.
285. Purchas, His Pilgrimage. 1617.
287. Ross, Alex. : View of all the Religions in the world, with the several Church Governments from the creation to these times; also a Discovery of all Known Heresies; in all Ages and Places etc. 1655.
- 288 and 289. St. Jerome's works.
296. Stillingfleet, Right Rev. Edward, D.D. (Bishop of Worcester); Origines Sacrae, or a Rational Account of the Grounds of Natural and Revealed Religion. Cambridge 1702.
308. Whewell, W., D.D. - The Elements of Morality, including Polity. 2 Vols. 1845.
314. Worsley, Thomas, M.A., - The Province of the Intellect in Religion deduced from our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and considered with reference to prevalent errors. 1845. (5 Vols.).
331. Bell, Dr. Andrew: Elements of Tuition, or the Application of the Madras System of Education to English Schools, Vols. 2 and 3, 1814-15. (2 copies of this book).
344. Buxtorff, Joannes, Lexicon Hebraicum et Chaldaicum. 1646.
354. Essays by R.W. Emerson. 1841.
355. Things after Death. 1848 (Author's name not given).
361. De Re Rustica, M. Catonis. 2 Vols. Russia 1543.
369. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 20 Vols. 1797.
372. Erpenii Rudimenta Linguae Arabicae (1638 ed). (Autographs S.T.C. and W.W.);...De Linguae Orientalium Praesertim Hebraicae, Chaldaicae Syriacae, Arabicae, et Samaritanae, per W. Beveridge, 1644;...Chappelhow, Elements Arabicae, 1730;...Selections from the "Bostan" of Sadi, in Persian, by Falconer, 1838;... The Saint and the Sinner, from do., by do., in Persian and English. 1839. (5 Vols.).
376. Gretten, T.C. : Traits of Travel, or Tales of Men and Cities, 3 Vols. 1829.

380. Harris, James: *Hermes, a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar.* 1765.
382. Hickesii, Georgio, S.T.P.: *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium, Thesaurus Grammatico - Criticus ET Archæologicus*, 3 Vols. Oxford 1705.
383. Hieroclis Philosophi in *Carmina Pythagorica Commentarius - Johan Carterio Interprete.* 1673.
385. Hulsii, Ant. : *Lexici Hebraici.* 1674 (S.T.C. W.W. autographs).
399. Martin, J., M.D.: *Account of the Natives of The Tonge Islands, with an original Grammar of their language, compiled from the communications of W. Mariner, 2 Vols. 1818...Letters on Sicily, By W. Irvine, 1813:...The Early History of Rhode Island, Boston, U.S. 1843.*
408. Plato: Schleiermacher's Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato, from the German, by W. Dobson, M.A., Cambridge 1836. *The Cratylus, Phædo, Parmenides and Timæus of Plato, from the Greek, by Thomas Taylor, with notes, etc. 1793.*
409. *Platonis Dialogi V., ex recens, Foster. Oxon. 1752.*
413. Quintilliani, M. Fabii, *de Institutione Oratoria cum duplici Indice etc. etc. Ed. Gibson, Oxford 1693.*
426. Schindleri, *Lexicon Pentaglotton Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, Talmudico-Rabbinicum, et Arabicum, Hanover, 1612.*
456. *Arabian Nights Entertainments, with New Tales now first translated, and Introduction and Notes, by Jonethan Scott, LL.D. Oxford, 6, Vols. 1811.*
464. Besumont's (Joseph, D.D.): *Psyche or Love's Mystery in XXIV Cantos, Displaying the Inter-course between Christ and the Soul. Cambridge 1702.*
534. *Les Oeuvres de Sarasin, 1694. Voyage autour du Monde, 1773.*
538. Galland (M.); *Les Mille et une Nuits, Contes Arabes, Traduit en Francois, 12 tomes. 1729.*
559. *Poem on the Immortality of the Soul by Sir John Davis. 1751.*
581. *The Conquest of Lahore, an Ode, 1846.*

356. Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology, by Rev.W. Whewell, M.A., 1837.
511. Croix, Les Mille et un Jour, Contes Persans, Traduits en Francois par M. de la Croix., 5 tomes, Amsterdam, 1726.

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APPENDIX C.

List of books translated from the Classics into English by Thomas Taylor between 1787 and 1804. This list has been prepared on the basis of the Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum.

- (1) Plotinus - Concerning the Beautiful, 1787.
- (2) Proclus - The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus, 1788.
- (3) A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, 1790.
- (4) The Hymns of Orpheus, 1792.
- (5) The Phaedrus of Plato, 1792.
- (6) Two Orations of Emperor Julian, 1793.
- (7) The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus, 1793.
- (8) Sallust - On the Gods and the World, 1793.
- (9) Pausanias - The Description of Greece, 1794.
- (10) The Republic, 1794.
- (11) Five Books of Plotinus, 1794.
- (12) Apuleius - The Fable of Cupid and Psyche, 1795.
- (13) Aristotle - The Metaphysics of Aristotle, 1801.
- (14) The Pythagoric Sentences of Demophilus, 1804.
- (15) The Dissertations of Maximus Tyrius, 1804.
- (16) Plato - The Works of Plato, 1804.

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- Inge, W.R. - Studies of English Mystics, London, 1906.
- Gingerich, S.F. - Essays in Romantic Poets, New York, 1924.
- Whitehead, A.N. - Science and the Modern World. New York, 1925.
- Dodds, A.E. (Powell A.E.) - The Romantic Theory of Poetry. London, 1926.
- Morley, E.J. - Correspondence of Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle. 2 Vols. Oxford, 1927.
- Korteling, Jacomina, - Mysticism in Blake and Wordsworth, Amsterdam, 1928.
- Sherwood, Margaret - Undercurrents of Influence in English Romantic Poetry, Cambridge, Mass., 1934. ✓
- Willey, Basil. - The Seventeenth Century Background. London, 1934.
- Jones, J. - The Egotistical Sublime, London, 1954.
- Bateson, F.W. - Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation, London, 1954.
- Beach, J.W. - The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century English Poetry, New York, 1936.
- Bush, Douglas. - Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, Cambridge, Mass., 1937.
- Grierson, H.J.C. - Milton and Wordsworth, Cambridge, 1937.
- Willoughby, L.A. - "Wordsworth and Germany", Germanic Studies Presented to

- Professor H.G.Fiedler.
Oxford, 1938.

- Wilson, J.D. - Leslie Stephen and Matthew Arnold
as Critics of Wordsworth. Cambridge,
1939.
- Crofts, J. - Wordsworth and the Seventeenth Century.
London, 1940.
- Willey, Basil. - The Eighteenth Century Background.
London, 1940.
- Burton, Mary E. - The One Wordsworth, Chapel Hill,
1942.
- Miles, Josephine. - Wordsworth and the Vocabulary
of Emotion, California, 1942.
- Meyer, G.W. - Wordsworth's Formative years.
University of Michigan Press, Ann
Arbor, 1943.
- Havens, R.D. - The Mind of a Poet, Baltimore, 1941.
- Peck, Katherine M., - Wordsworth in England: Studies
in the History of His Fame,
Bryn Mawr. Pa., 1943.
- Shorthouse, J.H. - On the Platonism of Wordsworth,
London, 1921.
- De Selincourt, E. - The Early Letters of William
and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787-
1805). Oxford, 1935.
- The Letters of William and
Dorothy Wordsworth. The Later
Years, 3 Vols. Oxford, 1939.
- Dorothy Wordsworth, Oxford, 1933.
- The Prelude, Oxford, 1926.
- Knight, W.A. - Life of William Wordsworth, Edinburgh,
1889 (3 Vols.).
- Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth,
London, 1924.
- Letters of the Wordsworth Family
from 1787 to 1855. London, 1907.
- Legouis, E. - The Early Life of W. Wordsworth, London, 1921.
- Harper, G.M. - William Wordsworth, His Life, Works
and Influence. New York, 1916.
(2 Vols.).

Wayne, P. - Letters of W. Wordsworth, London, 1954.

(b) Journals.

- Heller, Otto. - "Goethe and Wordsworth", MLN, xiv (1899), pp.131-33.
- Cooper, Lane. - "Literature on Wordsworth", PMLA, xxiii(1908), pp.119-27.
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- Herzberg, M.J. - "William Wordsworth and German Literature", PMLA, xl (1925), pp.302-45.
- Cookson, H.E. - "Wordsworth and Plato", TLS, Nov.25, 1926, p.868.
- Garstang, Walter - "Wordsworth's Interpretation of Nature," Nature (Supplement), Jan.16, 1926. pp.1-8.
- Dunn, S.G. - "Newton and Wordsworth", TLS, Aug.25, 1927. p.576.
- Harper, G.M. - "Was Wordsworth Ever a Mystic"? Discovery, ix (1928), pp.348-50.
- Pierce, F.E. - "Wordsworth and Thomas Taylor", PQ, vii(1928), pp.60-64.
- Hereford, C.H. - "Goethe and Wordsworth", Contemporary Review, cxxxvi(1929), pp.465-75.
- Stallknecht, N.P. - "Wordsworth and Philosophy", PMLA, xlv (1929), pp.1116-43.
- Claydon, W.A. - "The Numinous in the Poetry of Wordsworth", Hibbert Journal, xxviii(1930), pp.601-15.
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- M L N - Modern Language Notes.
- M L Q - Modern Language Quarterly.
- M P - Modern Philology.
- M L R - Modern Language Review.
- P M L A - Publications of the Modern Language
Association of America.
- P Q - *Philosophical Quarterly.*
- Q R - Quarterly Review.
- R E S - Review of English Studies.
- T L S - Times (London) Literary Supplement.

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